# 'First Irish case' of death by spontaneous combustion - BBC News bbc.com

- 23 September 2011



*Dr McLoughlin said he had attempted to find an explanation*

A man who burned to death in his home died as a result of spontaneous combustion, an Irish coroner has ruled.

West Galway coroner Dr Ciaran McLoughlin said it was the first time in 25 years of investigating deaths that he had recorded such a verdict.

Michael Faherty, 76, died at his home in Galway on 22 December 2010.

Deaths attributed by some to "spontaneous combustion" occur when a living human body is burned without an apparent external source of ignition.

Typically police or fire investigators find burned corpses but no burned furniture.

An inquest in Galway on Thursday heard how investigators had been baffled as to the cause of Mr Faherty's death at his home at Clareview Park, Ballybane.

Forensic experts found that a fire in the fireplace of the sitting room where the badly burnt body was found, had not been the cause of the blaze that killed Mr Faherty.

The court was told that no trace of an accelerant had been found and there had been nothing to suggest foul play.

The court heard Mr Faherty had been found lying on his back with his head closest to an open fireplace.

The fire had been confined to the sitting room. The only damage was to the body, which was totally burnt, the ceiling above him and the floor underneath him.

Dr McLoughlin said he had consulted medical textbooks and carried out other research in an attempt to find an explanation.

He said Professor Bernard Knight, in his book on forensic pathology, had written about spontaneous combustion and noted that such reported cases were almost always near an open fireplace or chimney.

"This fire was thoroughly investigated and I'm left with the conclusion that this fits into the category of spontaneous human combustion, for which there is no adequate explanation," he said.

**'Sharp intake of breath'**

Retired professor of pathology Mike Green said he had examined one suspected case in his career.

He said he would not use the term spontaneous combustion, as there had to be some source of ignition, possibly a lit match or cigarette.

"There is a source of ignition somewhere, but because the body is so badly destroyed the source can't be found," he said.

He said the circumstances in the Galway case were very similar to other possible cases.

"This is the picture which is described time and time again," he said.

"Even the most experienced rescue worker or forensic scientist takes a sharp intake of breath (when they come across the scene)."

Mr Green said he doubted explanations centred on divine intervention.

"I think if the heavens were striking in cases of spontaneous combustion then there would be a lot more cases. I go for the practical, the mundane explanation," he said.

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With Halloween here, there could be no more fitting time for the University Press of Mississippi to release *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses.* In the book, Elizabeth Tucker explores the history and meaning of campus ghost legends.

October 31, 2007

**By**

Scott Jaschik

With Halloween here, there could be no more fitting time for the University Press of Mississippi to release *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses.* In the book, Elizabeth Tucker explores the history and meaning of campus ghost legends. Tucker is an associate professor of English at the State University of New York at Binghamton and author of *Campus Legends: A Handbook.* Tucker responded via e-mail to questions about her new book.

**Q: What led you to this topic?**

**A:** I began my study of campus ghost stories in 2000, when a friend forwarded me an e-mail query about a haunted residence hall. This e-mail message asked residential life professionals for help in responding to students who said they had felt an eerie presence, seen lights going on and off, and experienced other strange phenomena in an old building with a history of suicides and fires. Several residential life members suggested that the best solution to these problems would be exorcism. After seeing this e-mail exchange, I decided that campus ghost stories merited further study.

**Q: You note in your book that many ghost stories on campuses deal with broken hearts (of women) or sexual mores. What do you make of the way these legends live on in eras with different mores and ideals for women?**

**A:** Many stories about broken-hearted female ghosts that haunt college buildings reflect courtship patterns of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The legend of the haunted "Wedding Cake House" at the University of Georgia, for example, explains that a young bride-to-be hanged herself in the attic after her groom failed to appear at their wedding. Such legends remind us of the long period of time when men were expected to take the initiative in romantic relationships. Today's courtship mores have more flexibility, but traditional proposals, engagements, and weddings are still important to many young people. Sometimes ghosts seem to have the power to bring couples together. In the "Wedding Cake House," occupied by the sisters of Alpha Gamma Delta, the young woman who lives in the room where the hanging allegedly took place is expected to get lavaliered, pinned, or engaged because of the ghost's influence.

**Q: How do you think these stories contribute to cohesion on campuses?**

**A:** I have learned that campuses with lively ghosts usually have strong cohesion; in other words, school spirits reflect school spirit. Ghosts add excitement and mystery to campus life. At Emory University, for example, the ghost of Dooley, a skeleton, has the power to disband classes during a certain week by shooting water at professors with his squirt gun. Dooley has a large group of Facebook friends: 2,484 the last time I checked. A couple of years ago, my folklore class at Binghamton imitated Dooley, shooting water at me with a Super-Soaker and declaring that class had come to an end. I didn't stop the class but told the students that I admired their spirit.

**Q: With more recent "ghosts," (faucets that supposedly turn on and off), would you recommend colleges try to disprove these incidents or just accept them?**

**A:** I have found that most stories about campus hauntings involve friendly, playful ghosts that cause no trouble. Most students enjoy talking about their campus' ghosts, especially around Halloween. Situations such as the "eerie presence" that got me going on my research may cause alarm, however. If students seem worried or uneasy, it can be helpful for folklorists and/or residential life staff members to tell the students how ghost stories have circulated on their own campus and others.

**Q: What are your favorite campus hauntings and why?**

**A:** One of my favorite campus ghost stories describes a descent to the basement of Pennsylvania Hall at Gettysburg College, where a student finds a "full working civil war hospital" in operation. The magical quality of this sudden return to the past reminds me of some of the best "Twilight Zone" episodes. I'm also very fond of the "Beer Duck" of Brandeis University, which jams students' refrigerator door when they reach for a beer; this ghost is typical of the admonitory presence that many ghosts represent, especially for freshmen. I also love the story of Binghamton University's Brian, who haunts the resident of his former room by writing the words "!!Em Pleh" ("Help me" backwards) on her computer screen. Eventually, Brian explains to the student who lives in his room that he wants her to tell his parents he died accidentally and did not commit suicide. Brian is a kind, caring ghost who doesn't want to scare anyone; he just wants to tell the truth about his accidental death.

Inside Higher Ed

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## 'Shark Week' Isn't Just Misguided, It's Downright Dangerous

Posted: 08/12/2014 4:38 pm EDT Updated: 08/12/2014 4:59 pm EDT

Look, we get it. Sharks are pretty effing cool; the Discovery Channel has been reminding us every year since 1988, just in case we ever forgot. Shark Week has achieved cultural holiness and has led to a public mania about the deep's fearsome predators. Sharks have so permeated our collective consciousness that it seems everybody wants to be a shark. Plus, if we said we never thought about what it would be like if Rob Lowe *actually* rode sharks, we would be lying. But if you turn on Shark Week this summer, be careful. There's a lot of pseudoscience and straight-up nonsense floating around in the airwaves.

Keep an eye out for programs like "Shark of Darkness," or more specifically, keep an eye out for their disclaimers. "Shark of Darkness" opens with this disclaimer about the 35-foot shark known as "Submarine:"

> Its existence is highly controversial.
>
> Events have been dramatized, but many believe Submarine exists to this day.

Except here's the problem: it's not highly controversial, Submarine just *doesn't exist*. As zoologist Michelle Wcisel points out, Submarine is a fabrication from the 1970s created to mess with newspaper readers, and now it has become a device to fool 3.8 million television viewers.

So is Discovery making things up about any other sharks? The answer is an unfortunate and resounding yes. Last year, Discovery aired "Megalodon: The Monster That Lives," which investigated the possibility of the prehistoric 60-foot predator patrolling the oceans today, except that the megalodon has been extinct for millions of years with no evidence to the contrary.

Discovery spokesman Michael Sorenson responded to criticism of "Megalodon" last year in a statement to Fox News. “It’s one of the most debated shark discussions of all time, can Megalodon exist today?" he said. "It’s Ultimate Shark Week fantasy. The stories have been out there for years and with 95 percent of the ocean unexplored, who really knows?”

He's right, in a way. It's complete fantasy. But that didn't stop Discovery from not only rebroadcasting the original "documentary," but going further. If you're looking for more "facts" from "researchers," you can watch "Megalodon: The New Evidence" on Friday night.

Entertainment is entertainment though, right? And as long as Shark Week contributes to a dialogue about how sharks are perceived and protected, Discovery's programming is for a greater good.

But that isn't the case. "Shark of Darkness," the megalodon "documentaries" and articles about where you're most likely to be attacked by a shark all contribute to further misunderstanding of sharks.

Not only this, but people are apparently so fascinated by sharks that they want to eat them. NPR reports that Shark Week's wide viewership has led to a "feeding frenzy," as the vulnerable shortfin mako sharks are finding their way onto plates across the country.

Now conservation programming may not be as sexy as "Sharkageddon," but it's important not to lose sight of the issue. Shark Week has the power to bring the plight of sharks -- not just their power -- to the public's attention.

Until then, don't forget that as terrified of sharks as we are, they face far more danger from us. Check out the infographic below and read more about the toll shark fishing is taking on the world's shark population.

*[Infographic via Joe Chernov and Robin Richards]*

Check out these sites for more information about how you can help stop shark finning:




- In this handout picture released by Awashima Marine Park, a 1.6 meter long Frill shark swims in a tank after being found by a fisherman at a bay in Numazu, on January 21, 2007 in Numazu, Japan. The frill shark, also known as a Frilled shark usually lives in waters of a depth of 600 meters and so it is very rare that this shark is found alive at sea-level. Its body shape and the number of gill are similar to fossils of sharks which lived 350,000,000 years ago. (Photo by Awashima Marine Park/Getty Images)




- A shark swims in a tank at the New York Aquarium on August 7, 2001 in Coney Island, New York City. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)

- A June 11, 2009 file photo provided by Elasmodiver shows scientist Eric Hoffmayer of the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Lab in Ocean Springs, Miss., taking fin measurements of a whale shark in the Gulf of Mexico, about 55 miles off the Louisiana coast. Hoffmayer says whale sharks, the world's biggest fish, are particularly vulnerable if they get into the oil slick. That's because, rather than moving up to the surface and down again, they eat by swimming along the surface, sucking in plankton, fish eggs and small fish. (AP Photo/Elasmodiver, Andy Murch, File)




• Home And Away actor Jon Sivewright launches the new Adventure experience Grey Nurse Shark Feed Dive at Manly's Ocean World on December 18, 2006 in Sydney, Australia. (Photo by Patrick Riviere/Getty Images)




• This Saturday, June 26, 2010 photo released by Bruce Sweet shows a juvenile great white shark swimming in the Atlantic Ocean about 20 miles off the coast of Gloucester, Mass., in the rich fishing ground known as Stellwagen Bank. The shark was pulled up by Gloucester-based Sweet Dream III, tagged, and returned to the sea. (AP Photo/www.SportFishingMA.com, Bruce Sweet)




• A shark swims in a tank at the New York Aquarium August 7, 2001 in Coney Island, New York City. (Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images)




• A shark swim inside a fish tank as a diver, left, cleans the glass at the Two Oceans Aquarium in Cape Town, South Africa, Wednesday, Aug 31, 2011. The Two Oceans Aquarium hosts group activities for school children and students which include the identification and observation of fish and other species. (AP Photo/Schalk van Zuydam)

• In this handout picture released by Awashima Marine Park, a 1.6 meter long Frill shark swims in a tank after being found by a fisherman at a bay in Numazu, on January 21, 2007 in Numazu, Japan. The frill shark, also known as a Frilled shark usually lives in waters of a depth of 600 meters and so it is very rare that this shark is found alive at




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## 'Warlock' slapped with restraining order in new Salem witch trial yahoo.com

By Valerie Vande Panne October 28, 2015 2:18 PM

SALEM, Mass. (Reuters) - A judge in Salem, Massachusetts, on Wednesday granted a self-proclaimed witch's request for a restraining order to keep a self-proclaimed warlock and business rival from harassing her.

Lori Sforza, 75, who calls herself a psychic and a "hereditary high priestess" had appealed to Salem District Court Judge Robert Brennan to issue an order stopping Christian Day, who calls himself the "world's best-known warlock" and owns magic-themed stores in Salem and New Orleans from making what she said were harassing phone calls.

The two are well-known in Salem, infamous as the site of 17th century trials that led to the executions of 20 people found guilty of witchcraft. Modern-day Salem capitalizes on its morbid reputation with tourist attractions both ghoulish and historic that help the city draw about 1 million visitors a year, with crowds peaking in the run-up to Halloween.

Sforza, who serves as founder and Head Mother of Our Lord and Lady of the Trinacrian Rose Church, in the waterfront city 16 miles (26 km) northeast of Boston, welcomed the ruling.

"I love Salem so much," she told reporters after leaving the courthouse. "No one should ever be abused, man or woman."

Day told reporters he had never harassed Sforza.

"All of this comes from business competition. All of this comes from when you're the best at what you do, you're going to have people who want you to fail," Day said. "We get people who get jealous. Might I have had a snarky comment on the Internet once in a while? Sure, but that's free speech. Do I call people with private numbers? Never."

Day hosts a "Festival of the Dead" in Salem, where participants can learn to become a paranormal investigator, hear from departed loved ones, or cast a magic circle on Salem Common.

Salem's tourism office estimated that tourism brought $100 million in economic activity to the city of almost 43,000 people last year.

(Editing by Scott Malone and Sandra Maler)

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27. UNDERTAKING,
Coffins,
Life Signals.

Div. 20

70,773

CLASSIFICATION
DIVISION.

896
34

(No Model.)

# J. G. KRICHBAUM.

## DEVICE FOR INDICATING LIFE IN BURIED PERSONS.

No. 268,693. Patented Dec. 5, 1882.

Fig. 1.

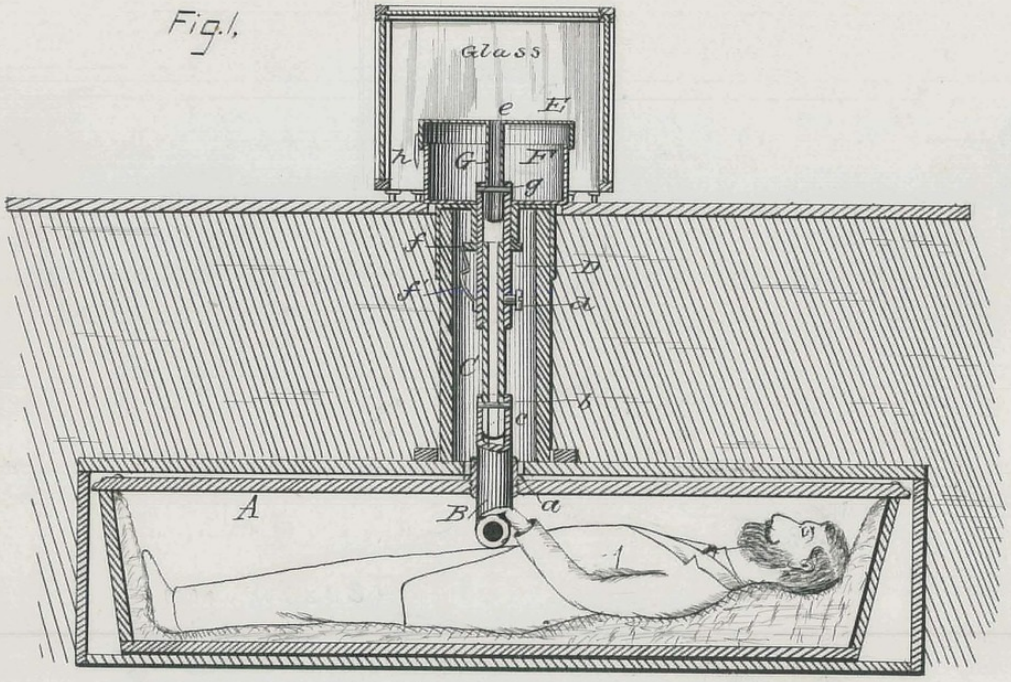



Fig. 2.

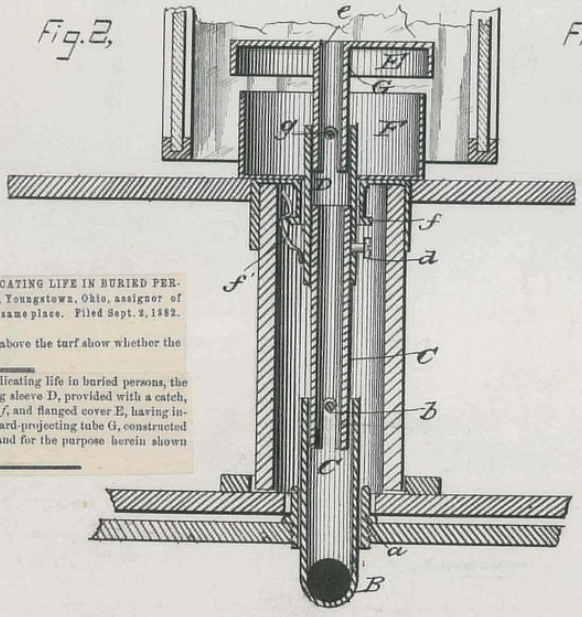
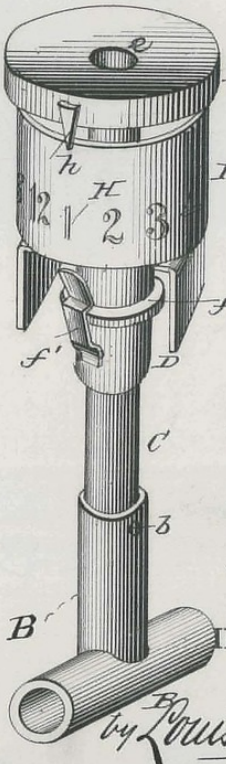



Fig. 3.




268,693. DEVICE FOR INDICATING LIFE IN BURIED PERSONS. JOHN G. KRICHBAUM, Youngstown, Ohio, assignor of one-third to Nicholas Bixler, same place. Filed Sept. 2, 1882. (No model.)

*Brief.*—An index and scale above the turf show whether the buried person has moved.

*Claim.*—In a device for indicating life in buried persons, the T-shaped pipe B, tube C, having sleeve D, provided with a catch, *f'*, box F, having flanged collar *f*, and flanged cover E, having index *h*, and provided with downward-projecting tube G, constructed and combined substantially as and for the purpose herein shown and described.

WITNESSES:

Fred. L. Dieterich.

J. G. Hinkel

John G. Krichbaum
INVENTOR.

by Louis Bagger & Co.
ATTORNEYS.

Aff. Lit. Oct 16/82.
Act 20/82

# LIFE-PRESERVING
# COFFIN
## IN DOUBTFUL CASES OF DEATH,

**BY C. H. EISENBRANDT,**

**Manufactured by Bobeth & Schulenberg, Sharp st., a few doors south of Pratt,**

**BALTIMORE, MD.**

The undersigned respectfully informs his friends and the public, that he has constructed a "*Life-Preserving Coffin*," which he flatters himself, upon examination, to give universal satisfaction.

The superiority of this kind of Coffin over the ordinary ones, will be perceived at a glance; and rests upon the fact, that the inventor has so contrived an arrangement admitting of pure air, and with springs and levers on the inside, that the *slightest* motion of its inmate will be instantly communicated to the springs, which, freeing the coffin-lid, it flies open—a circumstance which entirely relieves the confinement of the body, and thus removes all uneasiness of premature interment from the minds of anxious friends and relatives.

The inventor would advise all families or communities who may use his *Life-Preserving Coffins*, to place them in a room or in a vault with a lock on its door that will open either on the inside or outside, with a key which should be placed in the inside to allow the individual (who may be resuscitated) egress, or to remain until decomposition takes place, when they may be removed, and finally deposited in the ground. Whenever it can be done, the inventor suggests that the Coffin be kept in a properly heated room, which, from the construction of the apparatus, obviates all danger from without, at the same time admitting freely pure air within, and with a string attached to the hand of the inmate, leading to a bell, will, in case of resuscitation, instantly give the alarm, and provide for all necessary attention.

In offering the "*Life-Preserving Coffin*" to the attention of the public, the inventor is convinced that its advantages over all other similar contrivances are only to be known to be justly appreciated. In our own country, particularly in the summer season, and during the prevalence of Epidemic diseases: as Yellow fever, Cholera, &c. and more especially *in cases of sudden death*, this will be of incalculable value in preventing premature interment and suffocation, the most horrid of deaths. As most physiologists have agreed that there is *no one* certain sign of death, great difficulty must arise in distinguishing between a living and a dead body.—Many cases are recorded where such difficulty has been great and perplexing. Many of the usual *signs* of death have been present, and yet the person proved to be merely in a state of suspended animation. Other instances have taken place, where neither the cessation of the pulse and breathing, nor coldness of the body, nor want of efflux of blood from a vein, nor insensibility to stimuli, nor relaxation of muscles, nor disagreeable odor from the body, could be trusted. All these *signs* have been present, and yet the persons have recovered after possessing them some days.

In consequence of the difficulty of establishing any positive, unerring signs of death, many individuals have been consigned to the grave before they were actually dead, is a truth too well tested to admit a doubt. The writer might multiply a mass of evidence in proof of his assertion; but will refer to well authenticated instances of resuscitation after interment, as published in the Anatomy of the celebrated Winslow and in the History of Medicine of Le Clerc. The celebrated Calmut says: "that a very honest woman continued three days without any sign of life, but every supposed and definite symptoms of death. Every one at the expiration of thirty-six hours insisted upon it that she was dead, and her funeral was prepared; her relatives steadily opposed it. At the expiration of the third day she recovered and lived a long time afterwards." Indeed were there no other proof to show the danger of too early interments, the case of the Rev. Wm. Tennant (late pastor of the Presbyterian church of Freehold, New Jersey,) which occurred but a few years ago, and the instance of resuscitation after interment, published in the Baltimore Sun of November 30th, 1843, in the review of a lecture on "the *Physiology of Death*," by Professor Monkur, of Baltimore, would be convincing.

Such, however, is the conviction of the frequency and danger of this occurrence, that the inventor, after a long time, with much labor and trial, has the satisfaction to offer to the community the result of his exertions; being assured that when used as directed, *the Life-Preserving Coffin* will be found to serve the purpose of its construction in entirely removing the danger attendant on premature interment, and must satisfy and relieve the minds of the surviving relatives and friends.

In commending this apparatus, he takes the pleasure to add the testimonials of several eminent and highly respectable physicians and others who have given it an examination.

The public's obedient servant,

**C. H. Eisenbrandt.**

---

*Baltimore, January* 14, 1844.

*Dear Sir:—*

Having been requested by you to examine your invention of the "*Life-Preserving Coffin*," I unhesitatingly say that it is one of the most beautiful apparatus of the kind which has ever come to my observation; admirably and completely adapted to the purpose of its construction.

Believing from the present rapidity of burial, the universal custom of our country, of immediately thrusting from our sight our deceased friends, has consigned many an unfortunate creature to the horror of a grave resuscitation, which might have been prevented by an apparatus of your kind, and waiting until evident signs of general putrefaction had appeared; and being convinced that resuscitation is not a very rare occurrence, and will continue so under the present burial arrangement, I feel highly gratified to find you have been so successful in your endeavors to prevent this occurrence, and have not the least doubt when the value of your invention becomes generally known, a discerning public will amply remunerate you for genius, and mechanical skill and application.

Wishing you every success, I remain, obliged and obediently, yours,

**J. C. S. Monkur, M. D.**

Mr. C. H. EISENBRANDT.

---

I have examined the Coffins made by Bobeth & Schulenberg, called by them the "Life-Preserving Coffin," and think with Dr. Monkur, who has given the within letter, that it is quite an ingenious invention and handsomely constructed,

**A. Rich, Sr., M. D.**

---

Messrs. Bobeth & Schulenberg having submitted to my examination a Coffin made by them, after the invention of Mr. Eisenbrandt, I believe it to be well deserving of public attention and adoption, as calculated to be very valuable in cases of *suspended animation*,

**John R. W. Dunbar, M. D.**

---

Having examined the Coffin made by Messrs. Bobeth & Schulenberg, I fully and cheerfully concur with the foregoing testimonials in recommending it to "public attention and adoption,"

**J. F. Perkins, M. D.**

---

*Baltimore, Jan.* 31*st*, 1844.

I have examined the "Life-Preserving Coffin" made by Messrs. Bobeth & Schulenberg, and take pleasure in recommending it to the attention of the public, as I have no doubt it will answer well the purposes for which it is intended,

**E. W. Theobald, M. D.**

---

*Messrs. Bobeth & Schulenberg:—*

I have examined your "Life-Preserving Coffin," and I think it admirably adapted to the object in view.

Respectfully yours,

*Balto. Feb'y.* 15, 1844. **Robt. Fulton, M. D.**

---

The undersigned have also the permission to refer to

**Professor N. R. Smith** and
**Dr. Edw'd. Schwartze,**

both of whom have examined a specimen of the patent coffin.

☞The inventor has given the *entire* privilege of manufacturing the said Coffins to the undersigned, specimens of which can be seen at their Cabinet Warerooms, Sharp street, a few doors S. of Pratt st., Baltimore, Md.

BOBETH & SCHULENBERG.

F. Zetzener, print.

# Witches in the dock: 10 of Britain's most infamous witch trials

*Monday 30th December 2013* historyextra.com

What happened when someone was charged with conversing with the Devil or practising sorcery on the king? Owen Davies lifts the lid on 10 of Britain's most infamous witch trials

*This article first featured in the December 2012 issue of BBC History Magazine*



*Joan Prentice, Cony and Upney hang after third Chelmsford trial, 1589 - Topfoto*

The prosecution and hanging of two men and eight women on Pendle Hill in Lancashire in 1612 has long caught the public imagination, the story being retold in puppet shows, pamphlets, plays and novels. In terms of witchcraft as heritage tourism, Pendle Hill has become the Salem of Britain. A century later, the last conviction for witchcraft in England took place in Hertfordshire.

It is fitting to put both trials in context, and explore the rise and decline of witch persecution in Britain. Note that I've used the word 'persecution' and not 'craze'. This was not an episode of mass insanity: witchcraft made perfect sense within the world view of people at the time. It's also important to remember that, for two centuries after the last person was executed for witchcraft in Scotland in the 1720s, people continued to harbour a genuine fear of witches.

One common misconception is that witch trials belong to the medieval era. In fact, there were no laws against witchcraft in Britain until 1542, when Henry VIII passed an act against witchcraft and conjuration. But this does not mean that witches were not considered a problem in the 15th century, as our first trial shows…

### 1) 1441: magic in high places

The stand-out sorcery case of the pre-witch-trial era was that of Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester. In 1441 she stood accused of employing a magician named Roger Bolingbroke and a wise-woman named Margery Jourdemayne to kill Henry VI by sorcery.

They were found guilty, and to warn others against such practices, Robert was made to stand upon a stage constructed in the churchyard of old St Paul's Cathedral while a sermon was preached against magic. His magical paraphernalia was also exhibited, including wax images, a sceptre and swords draped with magical copper talismans. He was convicted of high treason and hanged, drawn and quartered.

Margery was burned at Smithfield either as a heretic or a female traitor. Cobham underwent public penance, pleading that she had hired the magicians not to kill the king but to use their magic to enable her to have a child by the Duke of Gloucester. She was imprisoned for life.

During the 15th century, concern was repeatedly expressed about necromancy and sorcery in aristocratic circles, leading to a handful of trials for treason, heresy, slander and murder. Commoners such as Jourdemayne were rarely caught up in such intrigues, but the tables would be turned more than a century later when witchcraft was seen to be a pervasive problem.

**2) 1566: blood, baskets and a cat called Satan**

Henry VIII's witchcraft act of 1542 was deemed unfit for purpose, and was repealed in 1547. It was replaced in 1563 by an 'Act Against Conjurations, Enchantments and Witchcrafts' – a clear indication that the authorities were growing increasingly fearful of magic during the early years of Elizabeth I's reign. Scotland passed its own, even harsher, Witchcraft Act that same year.

Essex was the heartland of the earliest witch trials under the new act, and it was the county that pursued witch prosecutions most vigorously over the next century. The first major trial in England was heard at the Chelmsford assizes in July 1566. Lora Wynchester, Elizabeth Frauncis, Agnes Waterhouse and her daughter Joan Waterhouse, all of Hatfield Peverel, stood accused.

Elizabeth Frauncis confessed that she had been taught witchcraft at the age of 12 by her grandmother. She had given her blood to the Devil in the likeness of a white-spotted cat, which she kept in a basket and fed. Agnes Waterhouse confessed she had a cat called Satan through which she worked her maleficium (simple harmful magic), rewarding it with chickens and drops of her blood.

Frauncis was imprisoned, Agnes Waterhouse was hanged for committing murder by witchcraft, and Joan was found not guilty.
The testimony published in a popular pamphlet, *The Examination and Confession of Certain Wytches at Chensforde*, helped spread the notion of the diabolic familiar – a spirit in the form of an animal.

**3) 1590: James VI and the witches of Berwick**

In 1590 King James VI of Scotland and his bride, Princess Anne of Denmark, were caught up in a terrible storm as they returned home to Scotland across the North Sea. Accusations were made in both Scotland and Denmark that witches had been employed to kill the couple. Suspicion fell on a pretender to the Scottish throne, Francis Stuart, Earl of Bothwell, and claims were made that a coven of witches had met at Auld Kirk Green, North Berwick, to raise storms in the Firth of Forth and so destroy shipping.

Unlike in England and Wales, torture was legally acceptable in Scottish witchcraft cases. It was applied to the North Berwick suspects, and extraordinary confessions then flowed.

Agnes Sampson, for instance, confessed that she took the Devil “for her maister and reunceit Christ”. It was heard that she and her fellow witches gathered in the churchyard to kiss the Devil’s backside and dug up graves to get finger bones for their spells.

Found guilty, Agnes was garrotted and then burned in January 1591. As for Francis Stuart, he fled his incarceration and became
an outlaw. James VI personally examined Agnes Sampson, and penned his own discourse on the subject, *Daemonologie* (1597). James’s desire to keep a close eye on the prosecution of witchcraft led him to decree in 1597 that all such trials be conducted by the central judiciary rather than local courts. The king became more sceptical about witchcraft accusations in later years.



*The Devil demands a pact from newcomers to a midnight assembly of witches in this illustration from 1626 - credit Mary Evans*

**4) 1594: Gwen Ellis is the first witch to be executed in Wales**

The witch trials were at their peak in England when, in June 1594, Gwen Ellis, a woman in her early forties who had been married three times, was taken to Flint gaol on suspicion of witchcraft. She remained there for four months awaiting trial.

Gwen made a living from providing herbal medicines for sick animals, and administering Christian healing charms to cure various illnesses. For these services she was paid in kind. But when a charm, written backwards, was found in the parlour of magistrate Thomas Mostyn’s Caernarvonshire home, Ellis was accused of putting it there to bewitch and not cure.

At the ensuing trial Ellis’s transformation from simple charmer to witch was completed when witnesses claimed that she had a familiar, a bad temper and a sharp tongue. Accusations accumulated, the most serious of which was that she murdered one Lewis ap John by witchcraft. On the last count she was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Ellis’s case was one of only 34 or so prosecutions for witchcraft in Wales, a remarkably low number in the annals of European witch trials.

**5) 1612: Pendle hangings cause a sensation**

The Pendle witches are famous for confessing to having attended a Sabbat (a meeting of witches) at Malkin Tower, Pendle Hill on Good Friday in 1612. The Pendle saga began in simple fashion when, in March 1612, young Alison Device met a peddler named John Law and asked him for a pin. Law refused and subsequently became paralysed down one side. Witchcraft was suspected, and a local magistrate Roger Nowell was informed.

Reports of one person denying another charity turn up in numerous witch trials. Alison confessed that she had made a pact with the Devil under the instruction of her grandmother, Old Demdike, and had bewitched Law in revenge. She also accused a member of a rival family, Old Chattox, of being a witch.

Soon accusations came flooding in against both families and others. In all, 19 people were arrested that summer, several as a consequence of a separate set of accusations made in Samlesbury. They were taken to Lancaster Castle to await trial at the summer assizes, and tried under the 1604 act of James VI and I.

This replaced the 1563 act and extended the death penalty to invoking evil spirits and using dead bodies in witchcraft – an echo perhaps of events at North Berwick. On 20 August 1612 two men and eight women were hanged at the gallows erected on the moors above Lancaster.

**6) 1645: an old lady's pact with the Devil**

Witch trials in England had slowed to a trickle by the time of the Civil War of the 1640s, but during this period of turmoil and strife the 'Witchfinder General' Matthew Hopkins and his sidekick John Stearne set about sowing a trail of fear and death across the eastern counties. While the idea of the Devil's pact was not new, it assumed much greater significance now with numerous instances being reported of people having sex with the Devil.

In August 1645, the Corporation of Great Yarmouth sent for the two men to examine 16 suspected witches, five of whom were subsequently sentenced to death. One of them, an old woman, confessed to having made a pact with the Devil in the guise of a tall black man. He took a penknife and scratched her hand until the blood flowed, then guiding her hand she signed her name in blood in his book.

The idea of signing a Devil's book was a product of this period, probably arising as a diabolic inverse of the Puritan parliamentary exercise of requesting people to sign or mark oaths and covenants of allegiance. Hopkins died two years later, having instigated some 300 trials that led to the execution of some 100 people.

**7) 1697: six people are executed on the word of an 11-year-old**

While the last documented execution for witchcraft in England took place in1682, three men and four women were sentenced to death in Paisley, Scotland, in 1697 for committing murder by witchcraft.

This tragedy began the year before with the supposed possession of Christian Shaw, the 11-year-old daughter of John Shaw, laird of Bargarran in Renfrewshire. She suffered fits during which she was rendered blind and mute, and vomited up pins, hair balls, feathers, bones, straw and other objects. Some witnesses testified that they had seen her carried through the house by an invisible force.

Christian first accused one of the laird's maids, Katherine Campbell, and an elderly widow

named Agnes Nasmith of bewitching her. She pointed the finger at others, too, and those interrogated named others, so more than 30 people were accused in all. Six of them were hanged and burned for witchcraft – and one committed suicide before the sentence was carried out.

This was the first time a Scottish witch trial had been triggered by alleged demonic possession – a remarkable fact given that such instances of possession had been prosecuted in England and Europe for decades. Christian Shaw, who came to be known as the 'Bargarran Imposter', later married a minister. Who knows if she felt any guilt about what she had done.



*Witches make a spell in this 15th-century illustration. The public's fear of magic didn't vanish with the repeal of the witchcraft law in 1736 - credit Bridgeman Art Library*

**8) 1712: Queen Anne's pardon spells the end of an era**

In March 1712 Jane Wenham of the Hertfordshire village of Walkern stood trial at the lent assizes in Hertford. She was charged under the Witchcraft and Conjuration Act of 1604 for "conversing familiarly with the Devil in the shape of a cat".

The trial was the cause of much religious and political polemic. Despite Judge John Powell's scepticism regarding the evidence heard in court – when one witness testified that Wenham was able to fly, Powell replied "there is no law against flying" – the jury found Wenham guilty.

She was the last person to be convicted for witchcraft in England. Sentenced to hang, she was subsequently pardoned by Queen Anne and lived out the rest of her life in the care of local gentry until her death in 1730. The trial is often cited as the end of an era, with the last of the witch trials bringing the curtains down on the early modern period and ushering in the Enlightenment.

The Wenham trial was not an aberration though. There is no doubt that the majority of the population of 18th-century England believed in witchcraft, including many in educated society. As the furore over the Wenham case shows, the belief in witchcraft was an important political, religious and cultural issue at both a local and national level.

**9) 1808: a mob takes the law into its own hands in Great Paxton**

The laws against the crime of witchcraft were repealed in 1736 but, in the absence of legal redress, communities periodically took to enacting mob vengeance against suspected witches.
In1808 several young women in the village of Great Paxton in Cambridgeshire began to

suffer from fits and depression – all signs of evil at work. Then a local farmer accused Ann Izzard of magically overturning his cart while returning from the market in St Neots.

Something had to be done. On the evening of Sunday 8 May a mob broke into the cottage of Ann and her husband, and she was dragged semi-naked out into the yard where they beat her in the face and stomach with a club. Others scratched her arms to draw blood, and so break her witchery.

The mob dispersed, but when they heard that a neighbour, a widow named Alice Russel, was harbouring Ann, they threatened her too. “The protectors of a witch, are just as bad as the witch,” it was declared. The next evening, Ann was attacked again, and word spread that she was to be swum. She wisely fled to another village and instituted legal proceedings, resulting in the prosecution of nine villagers at the assizes.

**10) 1875: hag-riding in Weston-super-Mare**

Throughout the 19th century ‘reverse witch trials’ periodically took place up and down the country. Those abused or assaulted for being witches were now the prosecutors and not the defendants. Several such trials arose from a strange nocturnal experience known today as sleep paralysis, when people, partially awake, suffer temporary paralysis and often frightening hallucinations.

In the West Country this was known as ‘hag-riding’, a term that sometimes puzzled the courts. In 1875 magistrates in Weston-super-Mare tried to get to the bottom of the experience when questioning 72-year-old Hester Adams, a widowed charwoman, who stabbed 43-year-old Maria Pring in the hand and face.

“I can prove that she is an old witch, and she hag-rided me and my husband for the past two years,” claimed Adams. “What do you mean by hag-riding?” inquired a magistrate. “A person that comes and terrifies others by night,” she replied. “I have seen her many times at night, but she does not come bodily.” When asked how she appeared, Adams said: “In a nasty, evil, spiritual way, making a nasty noise.”

Adams concluded that the only way to end their torment was to draw blood from Pring. She warned the magistrates: “I’ll draw it again for her if she does not leave me alone.” The magistrates fined her one shilling and bound her over to keep the peace.

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In *Comic, Curious & Quirky: News Stories From Centuries Past*, Levin pulls together some of the most bizarre tales to fill the columns of newspapers as far back as the 1700s – from the woman who in 1830 poisoned her dinner guests, then died, having forgotten she'd used the same saucepan just days before to boil arsenic for the purpose of eradicating vermin, to a marriage between a corpse and his living spiritualist bride in 1856.

Levin trawled the vast British Library newspaper archive in order to find the tales featured in her book. Here, writing for *History Extra*, she rounds up 10 of the strangest stories she came across:

**How to paper over the cracks of a housing shortage**

I leave it up to the reader's imagination as to why this idea, reported in the *Leeds Intelligencer* on 23 July 1853, did not catch on despite, on the face of it, offering an eco-friendly and cheap solution for papering over the cracks of a housing shortage: “Messrs. Bielefeld have commenced the manufacture of papier-mâché houses.

“The framework, the flooring, and the doors are of wood, but the rest is constructed of paper. A number of cottages, stores and villas have been erected at Messrs Bielefeld's works at Staines; and a gentleman has purchased them as an investment for Australia, whither he is going. These buildings can readily be taken down, and re-erected in a few hours.

“They have hollow walls, so that damp is excluded; and tropical insects will not attack the paper, for the poisonous ingredients it contains.”

**The man to blame for adding tips to bills**

Who came up with the idea of adding service charges to bills? Possibly this man, who wrote to *The London Magazine* in 1768 with such a proposition, having suffered abusive staff pestering for tips: “I speak of the licensed beggars you meet at every inn, when no sooner is the bill called for, but the setters prick up their ears, and scamper to obstruct the avenues of retreat.

“The appearance on the way to your horse and carriage of everyone concerned to deliver what you have ordered, give intimations of their demands upon you, as you hear them bawl out: ‘Pray remember the ostler', ‘the waiter', 'the boot-catcher’.

“Let landlords pay their servants sufficient wages, and at the bottom of the bill, write attendance, leaving a blank for the person to give what he pleases; you will find it much easier to make the landlord an allowance for that purpose, than to cram the hungry jaws of his gaping cormorants, who are so irregularly fed.”

**A recipe for disaster**

The following was a fatal recipe for a dinner date reported in the *Northampton Mercury*, 11 September 1830: “Mrs Shaw, wife of Thomas Shaw, mercer and draper, boiled a leg of mutton for her family in a saucepan which had some days previously been used to boil arsenic for the purpose of destroying vermin.

“When the dinner was prepared, Mrs Shaw sent part of the broth to a young man who was unwell, and partook of some herself. The Rev John Hughes, Wesleyan Minister, having called in, was invited to dinner. He and Mr Shaw sat down, and were in the act of eating, when Mrs Shaw was taken suddenly ill; and, as the use previously made of the saucepan in which she prepared the broth returned to her mind, she desired them to eat no more.

“The unfortunate woman lingered in great pain until Saturday evening, when she expired.”

**A royal cadaver**

A revolting description of a royal cadaver appeared in the *Hereford Journal* on 4 January 1781: “The body of the late Empress [Maria Theresa, last of the House of Hapsburg and mother of Queen Marie Antoinette of France] was opened on the 30th of last month in Vienna... and it afforded matter of astonishment that she did not die of a dropsy [swelling of soft tissues due to the accumulation of excess water], as was believed, no water being found in the breast, but a great quantity of fat and viscous matter, which is attributed to Her Majesty having accustomed herself, from her youth, never to spit.

“The resignation of that great Princess has been much admired; for, the nature of her disorder not permitting her to lie on a bed, she was obliged to rest on a sofa, almost always in the same position, which was extremely uneasy.”

**Respect for the dead**

In Dublin, the *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser* of 13 January 1872 reported: “It is a painful thing to see a corpse carried to the grave in an ugly black box under a mourning coach. It shows a want of respect for the dead person, for the relatives sit comfortably cushioned in a snug carriage while the poor dead person is shoved into a vulgar box, within a few inches of the surface of the road, and under their feet.

“In dirty weather this horrid box is bespattered with mud. The Dublin Police Commissioners have abolished this disgraceful custom: they have issued regulations that no coffin or corpse shall be conveyed in any carriage or hearse constructed also for the conveyance of passengers.”

**Queen summoned to court**

It is extremely rare for a senior member of the royal family to be summoned to court, but, the *Staffordshire Advertiser* reports, her majesty the Queen Dowager [Adelaide, the widow of William IV] was summoned by the rate collectors of the parish of St Martin to attend at the Westminster petty session on 10 August 1838 to answer for the non-payment of £104 and some shillings:

“This sum was due to the parish of St Martin as a quarter’s poor rate for Her Majesty’s residence, Marlborough House. Her Majesty, it appears, was willing to pay the rate demanded as a donation, but she objected to pay it as a rate.

“This, the parish refused to accede to, and proceedings were instituted. On the opening of the court, Mr Sergeant Merewether, Her Majesty’s Solicitor-General, was in attendance; but the case was, by consent, adjourned.”

It was ultimately agreed to accept the money as a donation.



*c1800: Queen Adelaide, the Dowager Queen, a princess of the house of Saxe-Meinigen, 1792–1849. From a portrait by Sir William Ross, from the book 'The Girlhood of Queen Victoria' published in 1912. (Photo by Universal History Archive/Getty Images)*

**Road to Wigan fear**

The road to Wigan fear was described in the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* on 9 January 1875: “Wigan has narrowly escaped a terrible disaster. A drunken carter was observed driving throughout the town a horse drawing a cart laden with about a tonne of gunpowder, the barrels containing which were only partially covered by a tarpaulin.

“The police took possession of the vehicle, and locked up the driver, who was described as having been very drunk. The danger of an explosion was enhanced by the fact that the road was very slippery, and that the carter, who was seated on the cart, had in his possession a number of Lucifer matches. The magistrate fined the man 20s. for being drunk, and on Thursday his employer appeared at the police court to answer a charge of conveying the powder in question through the streets without its being properly covered.”

**Multi-tasking Poo-Bah character has much to answer for**

A real-life English Pooh-Bah character is described in the *Sheffield Evening Telegraph* on 23 December 1887: “Truth describes the duties of an English official at Labuan, a possession of this country in North Borneo, who seems to have as many functions as Pooh-Bah in the opera *The Mikado*.

“There are only two English officials, Governor Leys and Lieutenant Hamilton. The latter gentleman combines in himself the offices of colonial secretary, postmaster, treasurer, magistrate, inspector of police, inspector of the prison, chief commissioner of woods, colonial engineer, and master attendant. In these various capacities he corresponds from himself to himself in the most stately official style, and carefully copies and registers his numerous despatches.”

**How to avoid getting in a pickle**

This report in the *Worcester Chronicle* on 30 November 1859 offers food for thought: “There is at present in the Bradford Infirmary a basket-maker, named Charles Sutton, who has been suffering from symptoms referable to poisoning by lead. He has lost the use of his hands, but

is improving under treatment.

“After much fruitless inquiry as to the cause, it was found that the man had been wont to eat pork which had been pickled in a leaden cistern. It is said to be the practice of pork butchers at Bradford, and perhaps elsewhere, to pickle pork in such cisterns, under the idea that the process is thereby facilitated. The plan, however, is fraught with danger to life, as the lead is certain to be corroded by the salt.”

**An epidemic**

“Within the last few years a cruel disease hath robbed the fairer sex of their charms”, reported the *Leeds Intelligencer* on 5 July 1768. “This distemper is epidemical: it was imported from France, first among the Court ladies; it then seized the citizens’ wives and daughters; and now it begins to make dreadful ravages in the country.

“It affects the head which swells all at once to an enormous size, with a tumour so prodigious as to make the patient totter under the weight of it, and when the disease has been of long continuance, it generally produces a violent itching. The French call it Tête de Mouton because it makes the patient look like a ram.

“Some time after the head is swollen to a monstrous magnitude, it sends forth a foetid smell, and generally breeds vermin, the maggots, which were first in the inside of the head, afterwards appearing outwardly.”

***Comic, Curious & Quirky: News Stories From Centuries Past* by Rona Levin, published by the British Library, goes on sale on 25 September, priced £10, hardback. To find out more, click here.**

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*E ImThe ghost of Jane Seymour (Pat English/The LIFages Collection/Getty)*

**In fact, the medieval conventions of what constituted a ghost story can seem quite odd to a modern reader, as can the apparitions that haunt them. Here are some examples of creepy tales that enthralled readers in England more than 600 years ago:**

**The Haunting of Frodriver**

**First recorded in the 13th century as part of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, and translated by Sir Walter Scott in 1814 in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities***

The story begins as a Hebridian woman named Thorgunna arrives in Iceland one winter. A local woman named Thuirda notices the rich treasures that Thorgunna possesses, and presses her to come and stay with her at her home in Froda.

Thorgunna refuses to part with any of her precious things, but agrees to stay and work as a servant. Soon Thorgunna falls ill and dies, but leaves behind a warning: her bedding is to be burnt, and most of her effects given to local monks. This, she says, is not out of spite, but as a way to protect the settlement from an evil that is coming.

Inevitably, Thurida can't resist taking the rich bedding of Thorgunna for herself, and sure enough the residents of Froda begin to fall victim to a series of grisly accidents, ghostly attacks, and mysterious plagues. After a funeral feast is held, they are beset by a crowd of walking ghouls that refuse to leave, and which gather around the central fire of the main hall each night.

But deliverance soon arrives when Kiartan, the son of Thurida, engages a local priest to stage a trial. The ghouls are charged with staying unlawfully in the hall, and eventually their leader declares, somewhat petulantly: “We have here no longer a peaceful dwelling, therefore will we remove.”

**The Bathkeeper**

**From *The Dialogi of Gregory the Great*, published in the mid-10th century. Translated by EG Gardner in 1911, and published in *Medieval Ghost Stories*, by Andrew Joynes**

A priest is visiting a hot spring when he comes across a man he hasn't seen before. The man promptly begins to attend to him, helping him to take off his clothes and shoes, and the priest naturally assumes that he is one of the servants there.

The priest then visits the baths several more times, and each time the man appears to him and offers to help him, but doesn't extract any form of payment. Eventually the priest decides that he should give the man a reward. He returns the next time with two Eucharist loaves, and offers them to the man with his gratitude.

When the man sees the loaves, he becomes distressed. He explains that he cannot eat holy bread, for he isn't a living man at all, but an apparition of the former overseer of the baths. He entreats the priest to intercede on his behalf so that he might find peace in the afterlife, and when he finishes speaking he vanishes, so that the priest knows for certain he has seen a ghost.

The priest offers up prayers, and sure enough the ghostly attendant never returns to him.

**Byland Abbey Ghost Stories**

**From fragments in a late 14th-century manuscript, transcribed by MR James in 1920 in *Twelve Medieval Ghost Stories***

There are many ghost stories recorded by the Monk of Byland. One such tale features a man trying to make his way home with a load of beans after his horse meets with an accident. He sees a terrifying apparition of a horse, and after he tries to scare it away it begins to stalk him. The spirit then appears as a glowing ball of light in a cloud of hay.

Finally the man confronts the spirit in the name of the lord, and a ghostly figure appears in front of him. The spirit claims that it means the man no harm, and asks to carry his load of beans for him. The man agrees, and the load is carried across a river, before reappearing on his back. After this, the spirit vanishes.

In another local story, a spirit accosts two farm labourers, attacking one of them. The man calls on the lord, and the ghost confesses that it was the canon of Newburgh, excommunicated for theft. The labourer digs up a set of spoons stolen by the ghost, and afterwards its spirit rests in peace.

Medieval ghost stories, then, often fall into the category of exempla – cautionary tales intended to reinforce Christian values. But they can also show the exchange of cultures happening over a large expanse of time.

The events at Frodriver read like a mixture of a Christian exempla with more traditional Nordic notions of the undead, while the events described at Byland in Yorkshire feature the kind of aggressive, physical apparitions that Vikings were fond of describing.

MR James – perhaps the most influential modern writer of ghost stories – was also an important medieval scholar who rediscovered many of these stories. He revived features of medieval folklore in his tales, including ghosts that transform into objects, and dangers that lurk in everyday settings. So perhaps our own ghosts are closer to the medieval than we might think…

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**Somerset is the author of *Rat Abbey: Three Ghost Stories*.**

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# 4 revelations about the Titanic disaster

*Friday 6th November 2015*

historyextra.com

**On the night of 14/15 April 1912, a brand-new, supposedly unsinkable ship – the largest and most luxurious vessel in the world at the time – collided with an iceberg and sank on her maiden voyage. Of the 2,208 people aboard the *Titanic*, only 712 were saved.**

**One of the most comprehensive and detailed books on the topic, first published 2012, offers fascinating insights into how the tragedy unfolded. Using rarely seen and previously unpublished accounts of the sinking, *On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic* examines the ship's design, construction and maiden voyage, and considers why so few of those aboard the ship survived.**

**Now in its third edition, the book has since been hailed as one of the finest works written on the sinking of the *Titanic* and was nominated for the 2012 Mountbatten Maritime Award.**

**Here, writing for *History Extra*, the authors share four startling revelations about the disaster…**

So many works have been published on the *Titanic* disaster of 1912 that many have asked: "What else is there to be learned?" The answer is: a lot.

When writing our book, we vowed not to regurgitate oft-told 'facts' – everything had to be traced back to original source material. Too many myths and errors have leaked into the historical record. Initially, an entirely new timeline of the disaster had to be built, and previously unpublished or rarely seen survivor accounts incorporated. We worked with a worldwide team of noted researchers as our work proceeded, hashing out debatable subjects and trying to arrive at the conclusions best supported by evidence. Emotional attachment to even dearly held beliefs were cast aside whenever the evidence demanded it.

The facts allowed us to quickly dismiss the most absurd of theories – those proposing a conspiracy to switch the *Titanic* and her sister ship, *Olympic*, in some sort of insurance fraud, or the idea that the *Titanic* was built to substandard quality in order to save money, for example – but our scholarly approach led to many surprises. Here are some of the more significant revelations included in the book...

### 1) Captain Smith and White Star chairman Bruce Ismay have been the subject of much derision and criticism – but the record suggests that both men have been treated unfairly by history

The two men have often come under fire for their actions during the voyage and the sinking. Captain Smith drove his ship at full speed into an ice field he knew was there; once the ship hit the berg, he's been accused of being rather detached from the evacuation, and of not taking a strong position as a leading figure when he was most needed.

Ismay, meanwhile, has often been assailed for allegedly driving Captain Smith to increase speed through dangerous waters, and of ordering the ship to resume course after the collision, thus endangering lives. He has even been criticised simply because he survived.

However, the historical record clearly shows that Captain Smith's decision to increase speed that evening, though clearly questionable in hindsight, was nothing extraordinary at the time. Indeed, the Cunard liners *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* (British ocean liners launched in 1906) regularly sped through those same waters, and even through known ice fields, at even greater speeds, and continued to do so even after the *Titanic* disaster. Clearly, Captain Smith cannot be condemned any more than every other captain of a passenger liner on the Atlantic at the time. Captain Smith was simply the unlucky one.



*Captain Edward John Smith stands on the Bridge of the Titanic on the morning of April 10, 1912. (Authors' Collection)*

Additionally, it has been suggested that Smith was 'in a daze' and ineffective in the face of the disaster. This notion has surfaced in many books and even on film, but there is virtually no evidence to support it. The source of this belief may be the ship's Second Officer, Charles Lightoller, who in his book described having to approach and ask the captain for permission to begin loading women and children into the lifeboats. However, the aggregate accounts show that Captain Smith was resolutely in charge, and that he was a captain of action during the crisis.

Smith, who was aged 62 at the time, was seen moving from one place to another, giving careful and thoughtful orders. Off-duty when the iceberg was struck, Smith quickly took charge, personally making two inspection trips below deck to look for damage, and preparing the wireless men for the possibility of having to call for help. He even erred on the side of caution by preparing the lifeboats for loading *before* he was certain that the ship was sinking. Smith was observed all around the decks, personally overseeing and helping to load the lifeboats, interacting with passengers, and striking a delicate balance between trying to instill urgency to follow evacuation orders while simultaneously attempting to dissuade panic.

The eyewitness accounts also indicate that Smith continued to work to save others until water literally reached the deck beneath his feet, at which point nothing more could be done. He then apparently jumped overboard rather than remaining on the railings until water engulfed him.

Meanwhile, the record clearly shows that Bruce Ismay, though quite involved in and excited about the performance of the *Titanic* on that voyage, exerted no undue influence on Captain Smith to drive the ship on at utmost speed against the commander's better judgment. Following the collision, Ismay helped to calm passengers and even actively participated in the loading of the lifeboats. Only at the very end did he take a seat in a lifeboat himself – a

decision about which we let the reader make their own judgment. Ismay suffered irreparable damage to his reputation simply because he survived.

In our book we carefully lay out the facts, and avoid undue criticism of these two men where the facts do not support such. A few commentators have implied that we actively try to defend the captain and White Star chairman. Quite the contrary – we simply found that the eyewitness statements, studied objectively, paint these men in a more favorable light than that in which they have often been portrayed in the past.

*White Star Chairman J Bruce Ismay. (Authors' Collection)*

**2) Shipbuilder Thomas Andrews did not meet his fate in the way so often portrayed in books, documentaries and films about the disaster. In fact, his death was substantially more heroic**

During our research, we were startled to find that every documentary, film and book ever produced on the *Titanic* had got the details of the death of Harland & Wolff's Thomas Andrews wrong. He is consistently portrayed as having retired to the First Class Smoking Room, in a state of shock, to wait for the end. However, we discovered that evidence to support that notion is only barely credible; even if he was seen there, it was long before the ship actually foundered.

Instead, we discovered astounding, yet very plausible, evidence from survivors: several accounts state that Andrews was seen near the end, helping passengers into boats and later throwing deck chairs overboard to assist people struggling in the water before heading towards the railings just minutes before the ship sank.

*Harland & Wolff's Thomas Andrews. (Ioannis Georgiou Collection)*

One particularly important eyewitness was mess steward Cecil William N Fitzpatrick: he reported that he saw Andrews and Captain Smith go over the bridge rail into the sea together [the bridge was the control centre of the ship, on the uppermost deck] just moments before the deck was swamped. Fitzpatrick was also on the bridge [that is, in the control centre] at the time, and he ended up in the water before climbing aboard one of the lifeboats. Fitzpatrick apparently reported this information in a statement to David Galloway, a friend of Thomas Andrews, who relayed the information to Lord Pirrie, Andrews' uncle. Fitzpatrick's own published account harmonises with his statements to Galloway.

**3) Eyewitness accounts do support the possibility that one of the ship's officers committed suicide, as portrayed in James Cameron's movie**

Another controversy was renewed when the 1997 film depicted First Officer William Murdoch

committing suicide, after first shooting male passengers trying to board a lifeboat. Some complained that this depiction was an insult to a fine man and a hero; many of these complaints came from people in Murdoch's hometown, and their defensiveness is understandable. Indeed, surviving Second Officer Charles Lightoller wrote to Murdoch's widow: "I was ... certainly the last officer to see Mr Murdoch. ... I was then practically looking down on your husband and his men. He was working hard, personally assisting, overhauling the forward boat's fall. ... Other reports as to the ending are absolutely false."

Yet Cameron hadn't invented the claims about Murdoch. After the disaster, numerous newspaper accounts mentioned a suicide, many naming Murdoch as the officer involved. However, a close examination of many of these accounts gives reason for concern: often, the alleged witness was in a lifeboat, or had been in the wrong location to see what may have happened. In some cases, evidence indicates that reporters of the day invented the quotes.

*This photograph, taken aboard the Olympic later in her career, gives some idea of the various decks in the after section of the Titanic. (Authors' Collection)*

Yet several first-person accounts, written by survivors to family and friends, indicate that *something* did happen on the forward boat deck, close to where Murdoch was last seen.

The two most authoritative accounts of a suicide are from First Class passenger George Rheims and Third Class passenger Eugene Daly. Rheims, in a letter to his wife, wrote: "I saw an officer with a revolver fire a shot and kill a man. … He gave a military salute and then fired a bullet into his head."

Daly, meanwhile, wrote to his sister: "At the first cabin (deck) ... I saw the officer shoot *two* men dead. ... Afterwards there was another shot, and I saw the officer himself lying on the deck. They told me he shot himself, but I did not see him."

Other than the statement of how many men were killed by the officer, this is very close to Rheims' account. Both Rheims and Daly repeated their claims in more than one account. Additionally, both men were on the forward boat deck, where most accounts place a shooting. In fact, First Class passenger Richard Norris Williams stated that he heard a gunshot behind him just as water reached this very location.

However, it is important to note that neither Rheims nor Daly mentioned the name of the officer. Could the officer involved have been someone other than Murdoch? Possibly – Sixth Officer James Moody was also in that vicinity. The whereabouts of Chief Officer Henry Wilde following the loading of collapsible lifeboat D on the port side of the boat deck, 15 minutes before the ship sank, are unknown. A very small number of vague newspaper accounts do allege that Wilde was the shooter.

Whether an officer committed suicide during *Titanic*'s sinking will probably never be known with certainty, at least not without the discovery of more eyewitness information, and many of the people who would have witnessed the suicide (if it occurred) perished in the disaster. At

present there just isn't enough reliable information available to make concrete determinations.

*A period artist's depiction of one alleged end of Captain Smith, where he purportedly brought a baby to overturned Collapsible B; the evidence supporting this is highly questionable, but is included in detail in the book. (Authors' Collection)*

**4) Until the wreck of *Titanic* was discovered, the majority of people believed that the ship had sunk intact. However, our comprehensive analysis of the eyewitness accounts from 1912 reveals that the majority of survivors who spoke on the subject stated that the ship broke in half**

In the course of our research, we were astounded when we undertook a careful analysis of survivors' descriptions of the ship's final moments. Before 1985, it was generally concluded that the ship had sank intact. Yet when we compiled survivor accounts of the ship's last five minutes, we discovered that the majority of survivors who commented on the subject had actually described a breakup. Furthermore, what they said they saw was remarkably consistent.

Although there was certainly a clean vertical break in the hull around the third funnel, the damage continued much further aft. It tore the superstructure in those areas, shredded through the hull's heavy double plates (creating a large piece of hull, dubbed 'the big piece', that was recovered from the sea floor), and broke two segments of the double bottom loose from the rest of the sections. In the process, the front cylinders of the engines were torn off; at least one survivor actually described seeing this event.

Those final moments were terrifying for everyone present. The picture we formed from combining the eyewitness accounts with forensic evidence should, we hope, be able to guide future researchers on the subject.

*Some of Titanic's lifeboats at her New York pier after the disaster. (Authors' Collection)*

So, is there more to be learned about the sinking? We found new information about the final performance of the ship's gallant band; showed how complacency had allowed the ship to legally leave port with so few lifeboats; revealed how Ismay, the White Star Line and Harland & Wolff had all happily prepared to meet new and more stringent safety regulations that never came into force before the disaster; and much more. We also managed to include many previously untold, or very rarely heard, passenger stories.

We formed all of this into a chronological narrative that tells the entire story of the *Titanic* and of those who were connected with her, and then also supplied a series of detailed appendices in the back of the book – nearly 100 pages filled with detailed data – to show how we reached the conclusions found in the narrative. We backed all of this up with thousands of detailed endnotes listing the sources of our information, and show where alternative conclusions are

either possible or are ruled out by the facts.

We have not been able to give an entirely certain answer to every myth and controversy. And yet, through the pages of *On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic*, we were able to provide a clearer picture of the legendary ship's history than has ever before been seen in a single volume, and show that there is much to be learned about the *Titanic*. The great ship still has mysteries to reveal.

**J Kent Layton, Bill Wormstedt and Tad Fitch are the authors of *On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic* (Amberley Books). To find out more, click here.**

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Whether you believe in ghosts or not, there is no denying that many hauntings were human, rather than spiritual, mysteries: ghosts were often the product of personal fears, anxieties, lies, crimes and deceits that are often difficult to fathom as historians. Here are five spooky cases for you to consider…

### 1621: Nunnifying Mary Boucher

Mary Boucher was a London servant woman employed by a Catholic lady. According to the clergyman John Gee (d1639), the lady hatched a plot with three Jesuits to convert Mary to Catholicism, and so have her 'Nunnified'. What better way to persuade Mary to convert to the Catholic faith than to convince her that ghosts returned from purgatory?

One of the conspirators dressed up in a white sheet and approached Mary as she lay in bed one night. The supposed spirit touched Mary with "a hand cold as earth or iron" and claimed to be her long-deceased godmother: "See that you tell my children what you have seen, and how their mother appeared unto you".

When Mary told her mother about the ghostly visitation, she convinced her daughter that it was nothing but a popish trick. But maybe John Gee, who claimed to have visited Mary to verify the story, was making up his own stories to deflect rumours that he himself was in thrall to the papacy…

### 1650: The haunting of Susan Lay

In 1650 an Essex servant girl named Susan Lay went to her local magistrate in great distress, saying that she was haunted by the ghost of her mistress, Priscilla Beauty, the wife of an alehouse keeper. Lay had given birth to illegitimate children by both Beauty's husband and her son, William. Both children died in infancy.

Priscilla passed away at Easter 1650. Three days after she was buried, Susan – who was then living in the alehouse barn – began to be visited by the pale ghost of her mistress calling to her, "Sue, Sue, Sue". The anguished Susan thought the spirit of her mistress had come back from the dead to punish her for her sins – "oh this woman will be the destruction of me", she said.

When Susan threatened to commit suicide, William told her, "this is a just judgement of God upon you for if she walks, she walks to you and nobody else."

**1765: Shrieking and groaning at Hinton Ampner**

The haunting of the Manor House at Hinton Ampner, near Alresford, Hampshire, began simply enough with the inexplicable banging of doors. A groom said he had seen an apparition of its former owner, Lord Stawell.

Mary and William Ricketts had purchased the manor in 1765, and soon began to regret it. When William left for a lengthy trip to Jamaica four years later, leaving his wife and three young children, the poltergeist phenomena began to intensify: Mary began to hear footsteps, knocking noises, and the rustle of silk in her bedchamber. By the spring of 1771, mysterious murmurings, groanings, and shrieks plagued the Manor House.

William was still abroad. Mary's brother, Sir John Jervis, came to investigate, but could find no rational cause for the disturbances. The family moved out shortly after, and the house was demolished a few years later.

Was it the ghost of Lord Stawell, or perhaps another previous owner, Sir Hugh Stewkeley? A local pauper had told the family that Stewkeley was rumoured to have buried treasure under the floorboards of the dining room.



*c1865: a man clinging to a tree in the face of an apparition in a forest. London Stereoscopic Company Comic Series - 72 (Photo by London Stereoscopic Company/Getty Images).*

**1834: A ghostly tenancy dispute**

In February 1834 four men applied to the Bristol magistrates to nullify the tenancy agreement they had signed because their rooms were haunted. One of the men said he saw the ghosts of two women, one wearing mourning clothes. Another's daughter claimed she also saw the ghost of a woman with light hair and grey eyes, who wore a cap with lace strings. She felt a draft of air as the ghostly woman passed by her bed. As well as these visions, all four tenants complained of a strange blue light appearing in their rooms.

The magistrate tried to convince them that there were no such things as ghosts. But the men refused to believe it, with one of them citing the Reverend John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, as an authority on their reality. Alas, the law could do nothing for the haunted tenants.

**1861: A murder revealed by a ghost?**

One evening in January 1861, several men and women were gathered at the fireside in the

cottage of Joseph Allinson, in Kendal, when terrible knocking sounds emanated from the room above where Joseph's bedridden, purblind wife lay.

The alarmed fireside congregation proceed upstairs to investigate the cause of the mysterious noises. Mrs Allinson revealed to them that she had just been visited by an apparition of a grim, rough-looking man dressed in black. It breathed in her face, causing the bedside candle to burn dim before being extinguished by some unseen hand.

The ghost pointed to the floor and in a thick, husky, hollow voice told her that she must dig under the hearthstone in the cellar, and there she would find something buried. The ghost then vanished.

Joseph and his friends immediately headed down to the cellar to carry out the spirit's instructions. On removing the hearth flagstone they found, just below the surface, a quantity of long-buried bones, thought to be human, and a scattering of hops. Were they the remains of a murder victim? Was the ghost that of the murderer, or the murder victim?

**Professor Owen Davies from the University of Hertfordshire specialises in witchcraft, magic, and ghosts from the ancient world to the modern era. He is the author of the forthcoming *Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic* (OUP, 2015) and *America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft after Salem* (OUP, 2013).**

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# 9 weird medieval medicines

*Monday 20th April 2015* historyextra.com

Just as we do today, people in the medieval period worried about their health and what they might do to ward off sickness, or alleviate symptoms if they did fall ill. Here, historian Toni Mount reveals some of the most unusual remedies commonly used…

Medicines in the medieval period were sometimes homemade, if they weren't too complicated. Simple medicines consisted of a single ingredient – usually a herb – but if they required numerous ingredients or preparation in advance, they could be purchased from an apothecary, rather like a modern pharmacist.

Although some medical remedies were quite sensible, others were extraordinarily weird. They all now come with a health warning, so it's probably best not to try these at home...

**1) St Paul's Potion for epilepsy, catalepsy and stomach problems**

Supposedly invented by St Paul, this potion was to be drunk. The extensive list of ingredients included liquorice, sage, willow, roses, fennel, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, cormorant blood, mandrake, dragon's blood and three kinds of pepper.

Although this sounds like a real witch's brew, most of the ingredients do have some medicinal value: liquorice is good for the chest – it was and continues to be used to treat coughs and bronchitis; sage is thought to improve blood flow to the brain and help one's memory, and willow contains salicylic acid, a component of aspirin. Fennel, cinnamon and ginger are all carminatives (which relieve gas in the intestines), and would relieve a colicky stomach.

Cormorant blood – or that of any other warm-blooded creature – would add iron for anaemia; mandrake, although poisonous, is a good sleeping draught if used in small doses, and, finally, dragon's blood. This isn't blood at all, and certainly not from a mythical beast! It is the bright red resin of the tree *Dracaena draco* – a species native to Morocco, Cape Verde and the Canary Islands. Modern research has shown that it has antiseptic, antibiotic, anti-viral and wound-healing properties, and it is still used in some parts of the world to treat dysentery – but I'm not sure it could have done anything for epileptics or cataleptics.

**2) A good medicine for sciatica [pain caused by irritation or compression of the sciatic nerve, which runs from the back of your pelvis, all the way down both legs]**

A number of medieval remedies suggested variations of the following: "Take a spoonful of the gall of a red ox and two spoonfuls of water-pepper and four of the patient's urine, and as much cumin as half a French nut and as much suet as a small nut and break and bruise your cumin.

Then boil these together till they be like gruel then let him lay his haunch bone [hip] against the fire as hot as he may bear it and anoint him with the same ointment for a quarter of an hour or half a quarter, and then clap on a hot cloth folded five or six times and at night lay a

hot sheet folded many times to the spot and let him lie still two or three days and he shall not feel pain but be well."

Perhaps it was the bed rest and heat treatments that did the trick, because I can't see the ingredients of the ointment doing much good otherwise!

**3) For burns and scalds**

"Take a live snail and rub its slime against the burn and it will heal"

A nice, simple DIY remedy – and yes, it would help reduce blistering and ease the pain! Recent research has shown that snail slime contains antioxidants, antiseptic, anaesthetic, anti-irritant, anti-inflammatory, antibiotic and antiviral properties, as well as collagen and elastin, vital for skin repair.

Modern science now utilises snail slime, under the heading 'Snail Gel', as skin preparations and for treating minor injuries, such as cuts, burns and scalds. It seems that medieval medicine got this one right.

**4) For a stye on the eye**

"Take equal amounts of onion/leek [there is still debate about whether 'cropleek', as stated in the original recipe, in *Bald's Leechbook*, is equivalent to an onion or leek today] and garlic, and pound them well together. Take equal amounts of wine and bull's gall and mix them with the onion and garlic. Put the mixture in a brass bowl and let it stand for nine nights, then strain it through a cloth. Then, about night-time, apply it to the eye with a feather."

Would this Anglo-Saxon recipe have done any good? The onion, garlic and bull's gall all have antibiotic properties that would have helped a stye – an infection at the root of an eyelash.

The wine contains acetic acid which, over the nine days, would react with the copper in the brass bowl to form copper salts, which are bactericidal. Recently, students at Nottingham University made up and tested this remedy: at first, the mixture made the lab smell like a cook shop, with garlic, onions and wine, but over the nine days the mixture developed into a stinking, gloopy goo. Despite its unpromising odour and appearance, the students tested it for any antibiotic properties and discovered that it is excellent. The recipe is now being further investigated as a treatment against the antibiotic-resistant MRSA bug, and it looks hopeful.

The ancient apothecary was right about this remedy, but it was one that needed to be prepared in advance for sale over the counter.

**5) For gout**

"Take an owl and pluck it clean and open it, clean and salt it. Put it in a new pot and cover it with a stone and put it in an oven and let it stand till it be burnt. And then stamp [pound] it with boar's grease and anoint the gout therewith."

Poor owl! I can't think that this would have helped the patient very much either…

**6) For migraines**

“Take half a dish of barley, one handful each of betony, vervain and other herbs that are good for the head; and when they be well boiled together, take them up and wrap them in a cloth and lay them to the sick head and it shall be whole. I proved.”

Betony [a grassland herb] was used by the medieval and Tudor apothecary as an ingredient in remedies to be taken internally for all kinds of ailments, as well as in poultices for external use, as in this case. Modern medicine still makes use of the alkaloid drugs found in betony for treating severe headaches and migraine.

Vervain’s glycoside [a class of molecules in which, a sugar molecule is bonded to a ‘non-sugar’ molecule] derivatives too are used in modern treatments for migraine, depression and anxiety, so once again the apothecary knew what he was doing with this recipe!

**7) For him that has quinsy [a severe throat infection]**

“Take a fat cat and flay it well, clean and draw out the guts. Take the grease of a hedgehog and the fat of a bear and resins and fenugreek and sage and gum of honeysuckle and virgin wax. All this crumble small and stuff the cat within as you would a goose. Roast it all and gather the grease and anoint him [the patient] with it.”

With treatments like this, is it any wonder that a friend wrote to Pope Clement VI when he was sick, c1350, to say: “I know that your bedside is besieged by doctors and naturally this fills me with fear… they learn their art at our cost and even our death brings them experience.”

**8) To treat a cough**

“Take the juice of horehound to be mixed with diapenidion and eaten”

Horehound [a herb plant and member of the mint family] is good for treating coughs, and diapenidion is a confection made of barley water, sugar and whites of eggs, drawn out into threads – so perhaps a cross between candy floss and sugar strands. It would have tasted nice, and sugar is good for the chest – still available in an over-the-counter cough mixture as *linctus simplex*.

**9) For the stomach**

“To void wind that is the cause of colic, take cumin and anise, of each equally much, and lay it in white wine to steep, and cover it over with wine and let it stand still so three days and three nights. And then let it be taken out and laid upon an ash board for to dry nine days and be turned about. And at the nine days’ end, take and put it in an earthen pot and dry over the fire and then make powder thereof. And then eat it in pottage or drink it and it shall void the wind that is the cause of colic”

Both anise and cumin are carminatives, so this medicine would do exactly what it said on the

tin – or earthen pot. The herbs dill and fennel could be used instead to the same effect – 20th-century gripe water for colicky babies contained dill.

This remedy would have taken almost two weeks to make, so patients would have bought it from the apothecary, as needed.

**Toni Mount is an author, historian and history teacher. She began her career working in the laboratories of the then-Wellcome pharmaceutical company [now GlaxoSmithKline], and gained her MA studying a 15th-century medical text at the Wellcome Library. She is also a member of the Research Committee of the Richard III Society.**

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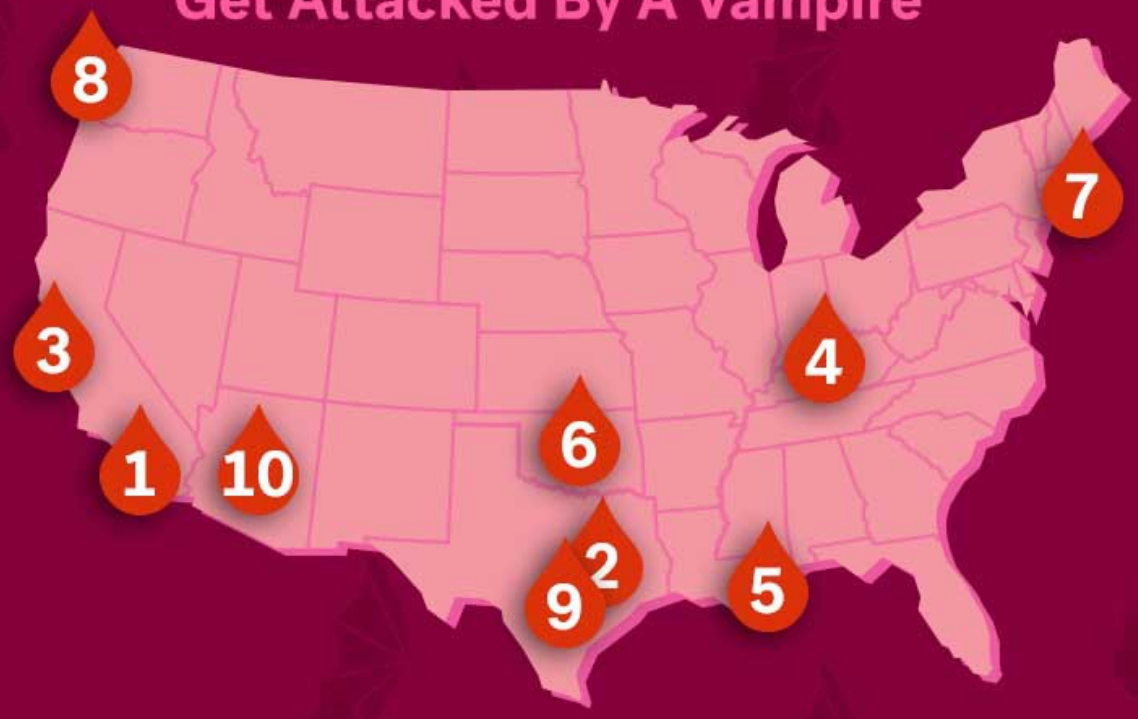
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# BITTEN

## 10 Places Where You're Likely To Get Attacked By A Vampire




Vampires tend to congregate in areas where their favorite food is readily available (hospitals and medical centers). With a little help from our friends at Yelp, we determined which areas are most at risk for vampire attacks.

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# THE FIRST CASE OF PAGOPHAGIA: THE BYZANTINE EMPEROR THEOPHILUS (829-842 AD)

## PRVI SLUČAJ PAGOFAGIJE: BIZANTSKI CAR TEOFIL (829.–842.)

**Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou[1], Costas Tsiamis[2], Dimitrios Ploumpidis[3]**

Summary

*The Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829-842 AD) died from dysentery, the exact nature of which is unknown. However, based on the original Greek texts of the Byzantine historians and chroniclers of that era, the possible cause of death may be connected to Theophilus' pagophagia (snow eating), in order to relieve the symptoms of gastric inflammation. Additionally to the symptoms from the gastro-intestinal system, the Emperor seemed suffering from depress after the defeat of his army and the loss of territories, among whom his native town, Amorion. The current study supports the theoretical possibility that the case of pagophagia in the 9th century AD, so well described by a great number of historians because of the sufferer's royal identity, extends in the past the knowledge on pica, still attracting the medical interest.*

**Key words:** *Byzantine History; depression; dysentery; pagophagia; Pica*

Pagophagia is the excessive or exclusive consumption of ice, snow or iced water, broadly regarded as a manifestation of pica (Parry-Jones, 1992a). Pica

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## Sažetak

*Bizantski car Teofil (829.–842.) umro je od dizenterije, čija je točna narav nepoznata. Kako bilo, na temelju originalnih grčkih tekstova bizantskih povjesničara mogući se uzrok smrti može povezati s Teofilovom pagofagijom (jedenjem snijega), kako bi olakšao simptome upale želuca. Uz simptome u gastrointestinalnom sustavu, čini se da je car patio od depresije nakon poraza njegove vojske i gubitka teritorija, između ostaloga i njegova rodnog grada Amoriona. Ova studija potvrđuje teorijsku mogućnost da je slučaj pagofagije u 9. stoljeću tako dobro opisan kod velika broja povjesničara zbog bolesnikova kraljevskog identiteta, proširujući znanje o piki (pikacizmu) u prošlost, poremećaju koji i dalje privlači medicinsku pažnju.*

**Ključne riječi:** *bizantska povijest; depresija; dizenterija; pagofagija; pika (pikacizam)*

is defined as a form of appetite disorder, presenting as the persistent eating of non-nutritive substances and has been described since antiquity (Rose, Porcerelli, & Neale. 2000). Some researchers extend the narrow definition to include the eating of both food and non-food items (McLoughlin, 1987), while others classify the picas into food, non-food and mixed types (Crosby, 1971). As a kind of inappropriate behaviour, pica is frequently associated with mental retardation, but it has been observed in all ages and both sexes, and particularly in young children and pregnant women (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5, 2013; Call, Walsh, & Attia, 2013). The most common types of substances ingested are earth (geophagia) (Nyanza, Joseph, Premji, Thomas, & Mannion, 2014), ice (pagophagia) (Bhatia & Kaur, 2014), chalk, grass, cloth, paper; the eating patterns are referred to as "-phagias" (Rose, Porcerelli, & Neale. 2000). This paper describes a unique case of snow consumption by the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829-842 AD), who according to the narrations of the historians and chroniclers of those times was an ice eater, developing a pathologic craving for iced water and snow. Theophilus' health problems are commented in accordance with this habit and an explanation for the causes of his death is attempted.

## Pica in Greek Medical Literature

The term *pica* derives from the Latin word for magpie (*kissa* in Greek), named after the bird's peculiar eating behaviour and indiscriminate selection of edible and non-edible items (Parry-Jones, 1992a; Rose, Porcerelli, & Neale, 2000). The terms geophagia and pagophagia derive from the Greek verb *phagein* (to eat) and the words *Gaia* (earth) and *pagos* (ice) respectively. Pica of earth and clay was a well-known entity and the first description of geophagia in connection with pregnancy is traced in the Hippocratic Collection: *If a pregnant woman feels the desire to eat earth or charcoal and then eats them, the child's head will show signs of these things* (Hippocrate, 1853; Woywodt & Kiss, 2002). Soranus (1st-2nd centuries AD) the most famous gynaecologist of antiquity also described pica during pregnancy: *Some people say that pica (kissa) has been thus termed from a certain bird but others, however, say that it has been termed this from the ivy (kissos), for it twines around in a way that also varies. It usually sets around the 40th day and then persists for about four months. Women are affected by the following: appetite for things not customary like earth, charcoal, tendrils of the vine, unripe and acid fruit* (Soranus, 1991). Aetius of Amida (6th century AD) providing evidence of the Byzantine knowledge on pica, attributed it only to pregnancy: *Approximately during the second month*

*of pregnancy, a disorder appears that has been called Pica, a name deriving from a living bird, the magpie... Women then desire different things... some prefer spicy things, others salty dishes and again others earth, egg shells or ashes* (Aetius, 1901) In the following centuries, the term pica is often used in a medical setting; in a 17th century text of the French physician Lazarus Riverius, a reference to ice and snow consumption by chlorotic girls constitutes an early mention to ice-eating pica, known as pagophagia (Parry-Jones, 1992a; Parry-Jones & Parry Jones 1992b). A number of case reports are published in the 20th century, associating the ingestion of extraordinary amounts of ice with iron deficiency (Coltman, 1969; Reynolds, Binder, Miller, Chang & Horan, 1968).

## The case of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842 AD)

Theophilus was the son and heir of the Emperor Michael II, founder of the Amorian dynasty of the Byzantine Empire, and a very educated state leader showing real interest in art and learning. Noted for the high level of his Royal Court, he also imitated the policy of the Caliph Harun al Rashid, wandering disguised in the streets of his capital, Constantinople, talking to the poorest and most troubled of his subjects and listening to their complaints, so that he might punish offenders without any consideration of rank or office (Ostrogorsky, 1993). Historians and chroniclers agree that there was something attractive about his personality that created legends round his name (such as that he chose his wife by posing a test to the candidates), although he appeared a religious fanatic opponent to the iconodules, having a strong zeal for iconoclasm. The numerous political and military adventures during his reign forced him to a permanent war against the Muslims with varying success and a strong influence on the Emperor's mood. The most serious event took place in 838 AD, when the Caliph Mutasim defeated the Byzantine army commanded by the Emperor himself at the battle at Dazimon and then occupied Ancyra and Amorium. The latter was the largest and most important fortress of the area and the city from which the reigning dynasty came. In parallel, the iconoclast movement failed to revive and its sphere of influence was confined to the capital and among few faithful followers of Theophilus (after his death, the restoration of the cult of the icons had been the first and pressing priority of the heirs). These two crises of the Empire had a disastrous result for the Emperor's health, already loaded with serious problems.

The chronicler Ioannis Zonaras narrates an episode occurring during the Emperor's stay in the city of Dorylaeon (Asia Minor) where he was informed about his army's defeat and the capture of some of his beloved generals: *The disaster sat on the soul of Theophilus without any consolation and he denied any food or drink except very frozen water, deriving from snow. Ingesting only this, he hurt his digestive system and dysentery emerged* (Zonaras, 1897). Zonaras supports that the Emperor, besides consuming unhealthy water derived from snow, suffered for psychological reasons, mainly the sorrow of his defeat and the consequent capture of his most eminent military leaders. Another chronicler, Ephraem, in his "Historia Chronica" clarifies the aetiology of the disease and describes the Emperor's state, who "*melts from grief*" and finally died from the additional disease: *Consequently the king's soul melts because of a great sorrow and a fatal disease ended his life* (Ephraem, 1990).

Some other chroniclers agree on the question of his dysentery: Michael Glycas writes: *He died from dysentery; the cause of his dysentery was the consumption of frozen water* (Glycae, 1836). Furthermore, Joseph Genesius directly links the emperor's stomach inflammation with the defeat at Amorium. The symptoms were so severe that Theophilus considered the frozen water he drank as almost warm (Genesii, 1834). Theophanes Continuatus agrees that the events in Amorium had a critical influence on the Emperor's health: *After being informed of the bad news, he started suffering from a stomach inflammation, feeling as if penetrated by an internal flame, strongly believing that even the iced water he drank was almost warm; the consumption of this frozen water from snow was the cause of his dysentery* (Theophanes Continuatus, 1838). Finally, Michael Psellus, an eminent historian, politician and philosopher with remarkable medical knowledge, referred to Theophilus' basic illness, melancholy, as a divine punishment (criticizing the Emperor's policy). *He did not differ from melancholic sufferers; he treated people with injustice and cruelty* (Pselli, 1990).

Except the testimonies of historians, a literary source, the "Life of the Empress Theodora", also referred to the Emperor's disease, describing the pain and discomfort of a pharynx inflammation (phlogosis) and the persistent symptoms of dysentery, all signs of divine wrath. A miraculous healing intervention of the Holy Mother ceased the terrible pains, the wild pharynx was calmed and the terrible cries of the emperor were no longer heard (Markopoulos, 1983).

## Ice and Pagophagia

Hippocrates (460-370 BC) had already recognized in his *Aphorisms* (Section II, 51) the medical consequences of sudden changes in body temperature: *Excess and suddenness in evacuating the body, or in replenishing, warming, cooling or in any other way disturbing it, is dangerous; in fact all excess is hostile to nature. However "little by little" is a safe rule, especially in cases of changing from one thing to another* (Masters, 1844; Hippoctates, 1930). However, in the ancient Greek and Roman world, adding ice or snow to wine as a coolant was a popular practice. Snow was packed and carried from the mountains by slaves, used mainly to be added to wine or melted drunk itself. Little was known on ice eating before the work *Praxis Medica* of the French physician Lazarus Riverius (1589-1655) (Parry-Jones, 1992a). Among the items consumed by pica sufferers, Riverius listed cold water, snow and ice (Fairbanks, Fahey, & Beutler, 1971). In the same century, John Archer underlined that *Waters of Snow and Ice are condemned because they are thick and hurt the Stomach*. Based on Hippocratic ideas, Thomas Umfreville listed (1743) a series of cases in which the drinking of iced water after exercise was suspected to lead to serious illnesses, even death (Parry-Jones, 1992a).

There was a widespread scientific belief that ice was dangerous, leading to the loss of natural body heat and then to various diseases of the joints, the nerves and bowels (Parry-Jones, 1992a). The prejudice against drinking cold fluids and iced waters survived in a great number of scientific treatises in the following years.

During the 20th century, when ingestion of extraordinary amounts of ice became accessible, pagophagia was considered related with iron deficiency (Coltman, 1969). In the 10th century, the Arab physician Avicenna commented about the treatment of pica *with iron steeped in fine wine;* the use of iron in various forms to treat pica throughout medical writings had not clarified the exact relationship between them. Two researchers also studied the relation of pagophagia and iron deficiency anemia, stating that anemia is not always present, as an underlying psychiatric disease may be possible (Crosby, 1971; Reynolds, Binder, Miller, Chang, & Horan, 1968). More recent studies (Uchida T, Kawati Y, 2014) support iron therapy in cases of pagophagia, although the pathogenesis of the symptom remains unclear and the mechanism underlying this abnormal behaviour has not been elucidated. It is noteworthy that pagophagia, like every type of pica, depends on a variety of psychological, cultural, behavioural and social factors and cannot be

considered simply a manifestation of a biochemical or nutritional deficiency and the mechanism of pica and its frequent association with iron deficiency has yet to be fully explained (Editorial, 1969a).

## Discussion

The most common types of pica, geophagia and pagophagia, present certain differences in geographic distribution and ethnic background. Earth and grass eating is the case of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar who *did eat grass as oxen* and represents a notable biblical example (Editorial, 1969b). Geophagia has been reported in some territories as a part of a cultural and religious custom described by the Nobel laureate author Gabriel García Márquez in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: the newcomer young woman is accustomed to earth eating *chewing earthworms and vomiting green fluid containing dead leeches* (Márquez García, 1998). Cultural influences have promoted symbolic geophagia as part of religious rites, magical beliefs and efforts of healing in folk medicine (Sayetta, 1986). Geophagia was not only considered connected to rural areas but, furthermore, during the 19th century, it was mentioned by explorers as an exotic and colonial phenomenon: Humboldt described the tribe of the Otomacs in South America, who showed the most peculiar behaviour eating earth in quite considerable amounts. Livingstone also described geophagia in Africa among slaves in Zanzibar (Woywodt & Kiss, 2002). On the contrary, pagophagia is more common in urban areas as ice and iced drinks are easily accessible in our days; during antiquity, only snow could be consumed and this supply was almost impossible.

Several theories attempt to explain the aetiology of pica: nutritional, sensory, physiologic, neuro-psychiatric, psychological and cultural. In infantile theories, pica has been viewed as a hand-to-mouth behavioural response to family stress (e.g., child abuse, parental neglect, separation, deprivation) and an expression to oral fixation (McLoughlin, 1987). Pica also occurs in chronic schizophrenia and this was recognized by early psychiatrists. Krepelin believed pica to be a sign of psychosis while recent investigations reveal a higher prevalence of pica among autistic patients, as compared with patients with Down's syndrome. Furthermore, pica represents a variant of compulsive disorders, together with compulsive eating, bulimia and various addictions. The repeated eating of bizarre and dangerous objects, such as razor blades, glass or needles, may occur as part of a self-mutilation syndrome, sometimes

associated with suicide attempts. In individuals with personality disorders, pica may be the way to gain hospital admissions, such as in Munchausen's syndrome. Finally, a psychoanalytical explanation of pica is that it may be a defensive regression to the oral stage of development and may represent a comforting response in individuals prone to anxiety (McLoughlin, 1987).

The description of the Emperor Theophilus' pagophagia is based on historical and non-medical sources. For centuries, there is no mention of such a phenomenon and it is evident that this event attracted the attention of the chroniclers and historians of the Byzantine era, most of which commented on it as a case of Mirabilia (rare and bizarre events) and as a peculiar behavioural manifestation, while attempting to explain the symptoms. The disease may have begun as an acute problem and then became a chronic illness (Lascaratos, 1995). According to historians, the consumption of snow was connected with a subjective sense of internal burning that emerged just after the conquest of his native city, Amorion, by the Arabs. Many psychological traumas derived after the defeat and the capture of his army's leaders, leading to the development of several phobias (Guilland, 1954). His psychological disorder, accompanied by obsessions, led him to deny normal food and ingest exclusively melted snow, drunk as frozen water.

Most sources refer to a pre- or co-existing dysentery caused by parasites (amoebas), very common in cases of dangerous or dubious water (Lascaratos, 1995). It is known that pica in its common types, such as geophagia and pagophagia, is present in ancylostomiasis and in other forms of intestinal helminthiasis but this association rarely received attention in antiquity (Vermeer, & Frate, 1979). A recent work investigated the possible association of pagophagia even with Helicobacter pylori infections in patients with anaemia (Asma, Boga, Ozdogu & Serin, 2009). However, the amoebadic infection is responsible for many psychological consequences, like pessimism, bad mood, sleepless, anorexia. All these symptoms may represent the "psychological" problems of Theophilus, described in the historical sources, as they constituted a part of the clinical situation produced by amoebadic dysentery and not as a result of the Emperor's phobias. The authors may have misinterpreted the possible cause of dysentery in their narrations, because they could not imagine psychological symptoms derived from a gastro-intestinal disease. This theory is based on medical data and is in agreement with the symptomatology that the historians of that era describe (Lascaratos, 1995). Theophilus died because of a chronic gastro-intestinal disease with diarrheal episodes which exhausted him (accompanied by electrolytic disorders), probably due

to a microbial infection derived from the melted snow of doubtful purity that constituted his only diet.

An equal possibility, common in all cases of pica, is whether the dysentery emerged as result consuming substances such as snow, often of poor hygiene and hiding parasites, viruses and microbial agents. If this last hypothesis is correct, then the cause of pagophagia must be traced to other reasons, probably psychological, and gastro-intestinal dysentery must be considered as an inevitable secondary consequence. No matter what is true, the case of the Emperor Theophilus' pica remains unique, as for the first time in the history of the disease, a state leader appears with an old and existing but underestimated appetite disorder, pagophagia, scarcely studied and analyzed.

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28 OCTOBER 2015

# A concise literary history of the vampire - from 1816 to Twilight

http://www.oxfordtoday.ox.ac.uk/opinion/concise-literary-history-vampire-1816-twilight#



*Above: The Spire of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin under a full moon*

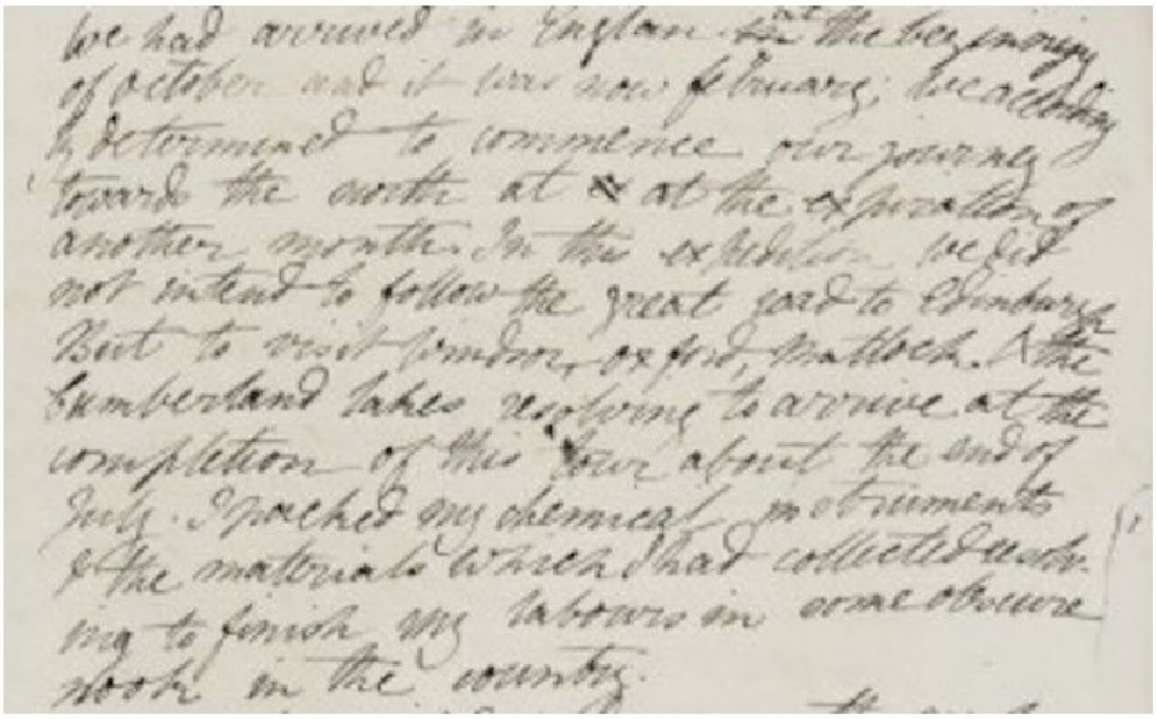
*By Kate O'Connor (Lincoln, 2014)*

You've heard of ***Twilight***. You may have even read ***Twilight***. Try as you might, you can't escape ***Twilight*** (or 'True Blood', or Anne Rice, or wonderful B-horror vampire movies that are on ITV at three in the morning). These days, vampires are everywhere. So where did they come from?



*Above: Villa Diodati, which Byron rented in 1816, lies near the shore of Lake Geneva at Cologny*

In England, the vampire craze began in 1819, the Year Without a Summer. Lord Byron, John Polidori, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Wollstonescraft Shelley (see the Bodleian Library's exhibition on the Shelleys here), and Claire Clairmont were staying at Villa Diodati by Lake Geneva. Trapped indoors due to bad weather for three days, they took turns telling, then writing, ghost stories. Mary Shelley's would become *Frankenstein*. John Polidori, physician to Byron (inspired by his pale, languid, over-sexed patient) wrote *The Vampyre: A Tale*.


we had arrived in England the beginning of October and it was now January. We determined to commence our journey towards the north at the expiration of another month. In this excursion we did not intend to follow the great road to Edinburgh but to visit London, Oxford, Matlock. The Cumberland lakes and thus to arrive at the completion of this tour about the end of July. I packed my chemical instruments & the materials which I had collected meaning to finish my labours in some obscure nook in the country.

*Above: Halfway through Mary Shelley's novel, Victor Frankenstein and his friend Clerval travel to Oxford. In this draft they are charmed by the city, and amused by its strange rules*




A craze (or bloodlust?) was born. Lord Ruthven was a vampire modelled after the Byronic hero, sophisticated, tortured, and highly seductive. Partly because of a misattribution to Byron, the story was published in *New Monthly Magazine*, and became an instant hit. *The Vampyre* was made into a play and an opera.

Emily Brontë would reference the new fad for vampires in her 1847 novel *Wuthering Heights*, when the housekeeper suspects Heathcliff of being a vampire.

In 1872, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu wrote *Carmilla*, a novella which introduced the concept of lesbian vampires, which Hollywood would later adore.

In 1897, English literary vampires reached thrilling new heights with the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which introduced such conventions as garlic, stakes, vampire brides, Vlad the Impaler, and the vampire hunter Dr. Abraham Van Helsing.

It also provided some intriguing commentary on the role of women and sexual repression in Victorian society). Today, the character of Count Dracula appears in over 272 films.

Why did the vampire capture the English (and now, global) imagination in the way that it did? We are of course assuming an explanation other than vampires using their dark powers to seduce us all.




*Above: The character of the vampire captured Victorian society's imaginations, and embodied its fears*

Literary vampires grapple with basic fears: fears of what is foreign, of the dark, and of the enemy that can pass among us, unrecognised. They also capitalise on the sort of sensationalised, tantalising danger that was popularised by news reports about the Jack the Ripper murders. Vampires are sexual, mysterious, and have a long history and extensive lore. Most of all, they make a great bad guy.

*Kate O'Connor is a postgraduate specialising in English Literature 1550-1700 at Lincoln College.*

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Much ado about Shakespeare: How Dr Johnson popularised the Bard

Oxford historian Peter Frankopan on following 'the call from the east' to write his new book

# A Look Inside Track 61, The Secret Train Platform Under The Waldorf-Astoria

by Jen Carlson in Arts & Entertainment on Feb 20, 2015 12:45 pm



Photo by Sam Horine/Gothamist



There are secrets under our feet, above our heads, and around every corner in New York City, many you may be passing by without even knowing it. Some of these special nooks are easier to access than others, and one time capsule that remains just out of reach is Track 61, which, at one end, is found behind a locked door on 49th Street.

This is the secret train platform that Franklin D. Roosevelt and other VIPs used to enter the Waldorf-Astoria (it was first used by General Pershing in 1938). It has been out of service for decades, but back in 2011 we visited the underground space, which still houses the tracks, the train car, and even the private elevator. In September of 1929, the NY Times reported on the new hotel's private railway siding underneath their building.

> "Guests with private rail cars may have them routed directly to the hotel instead of to the Pennsylvania Station or the Grand Central Terminal, and may leave their cars at a special elevator which will take them directly to their suites or to the lobby. The arrangement is made possible because of the fact that the New York Central tracks pass directly beneath the block, which has been obtained by the Hotel Waldorf-Astoria Corporation from the New York Central Railroad on a sixty-three-year leasehold, the lease being in reality only for the "air rights" on the site."

According to *Grand Central: How a Train Station Transformed America*, FDR, who most famously used the secret entrance, did so "in part to hide his disability from the public." Everything was made so large that, according to the MTA's Dan Brucker, it could fit FDR's armor-plated Pierce Arrow car, which would drive off the train, onto the platform, and straight into the elevator.

Brucker has said that FDR's car would exit on 49th Street and head to the hotel garage, but on other occasions has said FDR's "limousine would be lifted up and then backed out into the

Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria." At least one visit is confirmed by Secret Service logs, and took place on October 21st, 1944, "when the president had a full day of campaigning in a 51-mile, four-borough motorcade. His day was capped by a speech at the Waldorf... at 10:05, according to the logs, he was to take the hotel's elevator 'and proceed via New York Central elevators to the New York Central Railway siding, located in the basement of the hotel, where his car will have been spotted.'" Here's an old History Channel report on the track:

How can YOU see it? An MTA spokesperson told us today that there are no tours, and "nothing has changed in 50 years. Except more dust." You can, however, spot it out the window of certain MetroNorth trains leaving the station—just look right as you depart.

In 2011, Brucker told us the train car would remain there, and so it has (so far). No parties though, like the one Andy Warhol threw on the tracks in 1965.

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# A Nightmare on Peachtree Street: Reports of Hauntings in and around Atlanta

By: Catrina Dygert |
Posted: October 21, 2015

While many Georgia towns are famous for their ghost stories and urban legends, Atlanta is often left out of the mix. Most people come to Atlanta for business rather than local history. However, that history is teeming with legends of the spooky and supernatural, including some supernatural sightings in these five locations:

## The Masquerade



*Photo by: Ralph Hernandez*

Originally called Excelsior Mill Restaurant and Bar, The Masquerade has been serving up spirits, both supernatural and boozy, since the beginning of the 1900s. With three levels called Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell, The Masq offers otherworldly creatures the perfect spot to roam. There have been reports of a ghost in the form of a tall, black man lurking around the halls. However, no one has been able to identify him. Staff members have also report strange cold spots, overturned electric equipment, and loud footsteps with no discernable source.

The most incredible legend, though, is The Masquerade's live-in vampire. Unfortunately, no one can confirm any vampire sightings so far. The legend probably started from someone who met one of the members of Atlanta's Vampire Alliance or simply as a myth started by visitors who were intrigued by the venue's typical Goth attendees.

## Ellis Hotel

The Ellis Hotel opened in 1913 under the moniker "Winecoff Hotel." At 15 stories, it dwarfed the surrounding hotels – and not just in height. The Winecoff, built out of brick and stone, was deemed "fireproof" by city officials, despite not having any sprinklers or fire exits. As fate would have it, fire broke out Dec. 7, 1946. The fire department was quick to the scene, but their ladders only reached the eighth floor and the safety nets could only sustain jumps from less than 70 feet. 119 of the 280 guests staying in the hotel that night died, cementing the disaster as the Titanic of hotel fires and leading some to suggest that the hotel wanted it to happen.



*Photo by: Ralph Hernandez*

While guests probably won't run into Lady Gaga, there have been several guest accounts of disembodied footsteps and strange odors around the hotel. Workers have also claimed tools disappeared on the job. The real thrill, though, is the mysterious faces that can supposedly be seen in the windows of the hotel; some witnesses say the faces can be seen screaming in terror.

Several teams, including the Center for Inquiry, have written about this phenomenon, suggesting it's nothing more than pareidolia, or the human mind's tendency to perceive a pattern where there is none. The only way to know for sure is to stay the night yourself.

**Anthony's Fine Dining**

First constructed in 1797, Anthony's Fine Dining, also known as The Pope-Walton House, has had its share of rough history. The house was actually looted by General Sherman during his march to the sea in the Civil War. In the end, Sherman spared decided to spare the house because of the newborn baby who was being cared for there. Sherman's mercy later allowed Dayton Smith to move the house brick-by-brick from its original location in Wilkes County to its current location on Piedmont Road.

Since the move, customers have reported the usual myriad of supernatural happenings: strange footsteps, mysterious odors, and flickering lights. However, Alan Levine, a writer for The Vinings Gazette, stayed overnight at the restaurant in 1998. Levine claims he saw "a woman [he's] never seen before in a dress unlike anything you'd see today." The Southeastern Institute of Paranormal Research (SIPR) has conducted investigations at the restaurant and the original land, with reports that back up Levine's experience. The SIPR team documented electronic voice phenomenon and strange presences but were not able to conclusively prove that the site is haunted. Unfortunately, Anthony's Fine Dining is permanently closed, so there won't be any more ghost reports anytime soon.

**St. James Episcopal Cemetery**

The St. James Episcopal Cemetery, located just outside Atlanta, has drawn attention as the final resting place of six-year old JonBenét Ramsey, a beauty pageant star who was found murdered in her parents' home in Boulder, Colo. in 1996. However, the statue of Mary Meinert really steals the show. Legend has it that anyone who visits the cemetery at midnight might witness the statue cry tears of blood or switch the infants she holds in her arms. Ayanna Guyhto, a writer for The Examiner, investigated the myth. Although she did not see any tears of blood, Guyhto said she immediately sensed a supernatural presence upon entering the cemetery. The graveyard is also featured as a stop on the Ghosts of Marietta tour, for those who want to check out the spirits themselves.

**Oakland Cemetery**



*Photo by: Ralph Hernandez*

As if a cemetery isn't tragic enough, in 2008 the land was ripped apart by a tornado that swept through downtown Atlanta. The storm toppled several statues, including one of the Archangel Gabriel with his trumpet in hand, and disrupted the slumber of the souls that rest there. The cemetery, founded in 1850, is kept pristine by the Historic Oakland Foundation. Over the years, it has expanded from a mere 6 acres to 48 acres today and serves as the final resting place for roughly 70,000 claimed and unclaimed spirits – 6,900 of whom were Confederate soldiers.

Rumor has it that visitors who walk through the Confederate side of the cemetery can still hear roll call for a portion of these soldiers being read off. According to Southern Spirit Guide, a man named William Bender even reported hearing his own name attached to the list. Other accounts recall sights of a Union soldier hanging from a tree in the cemetery. Again, there is no concrete proof of a haunting, but new sightings are reported every year.

While none of these hauntings are conclusive, most do offer public tours for anyone with an interest in the paranormal. It would be the perfect opportunity to break out your iPhone and Ghost Capture app to see if you can find some spirits of your own.

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# A Short History of the Executioner

*Posted by Stassa Edwards on June 11, 2014*





*The history of the professional executioner is a chronicle of perfecting the choreography of death. (Painting credit: Caravaggio, Judith Beheading Holofernes , 1598.*

Thomas Cromwell stood on the scaffold of Tower Hill.

On a warm July day, he declared to the crowd his intention to die "in the traditional faith." Cromwell knelt and placed his head on the stone, and the executioner began his work. The executioner, it seems, was having a bad day. Though he had executed Thomas More with a single swing of the axe, for some reason he could not muster that same strength for Cromwell. The executioner made such a scene that sixteenth-century chronicler Edward Hall thought it important to record the grisly event: "[Cromwell] so paciently suffered the stroke of the axe, by a ragged and Boocherly miser, whiche very ungoodly perfourmed the Office."

Perhaps it's surprising that a beheading could be too grisly, too spectacularly bloody. An execution is supposed to terrorize; to, as Michel Foucault puts it, "arouse feelings of terror by the spectacle of power." Though the crowd that had gathered at Tower Hill was prepared for a gory spectacle—they were there, after all, to witness the beheading of a traitor—they were not prepared for the mismanaged scene that unfolded before them. Hall, like most of the executioner's crowd, would have expected a quick, clean execution. The chronicler's language is telling: he indicts Cromwell's executioner not for the killing, but for its particularly shoddy nature. The executioner's botched job was unnecessarily cruel, not to mention a poor reflection on "the Office." It seems the executioner's greatest offense was his lack of professionalism.

The history of the professional executioner is a chronicle of perfecting the choreography of death. It's a story of exacting skill and the never-ending search for a more efficient means to enact (and contain) the spectacle of death. The professionalization of death—a chilling business—was cultivated for centuries by a profane tribe of men who were denied civil status and ostracized from nearly every aspect of daily life. Forced to live at the margins, the executioner was defined by ambiguities: a pivotal actor in the multipart drama of public killing, an extension of the crown, and yet morally hazy and universally despised.

One did not simply become an executioner; rather, one was generally born into the profession. Though not legally hereditary, the office was usually recognized as a family trade.

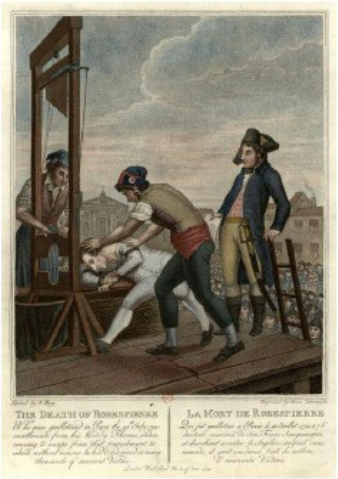


*Exécution de Gosson sur la place d'Arras, 16th century BNF BNF*

The title of executioner passed from eldest son to eldest son; younger sons and nephews remained in the family business, filling vacancies in other cities or working as assistants. Daughters of executioners invariably married sons of executioners, therefore providing an endless bounty of death's choreographers.

Thus the genealogy of the executioner, much like any European royal dynasty, can be drawn as a continually intermarried family tree: the Sansons served through the downfall of the French monarchy and into the reign of Napoleon; the Reichharts survived Weimar politics to work for both Adolf Hitler and the Allied Forces; and the Pierrepoints are synonymous with capital punishment in Britain. If the father died before an heir came of age, something akin to a regency was established. In 1741, Jean-Baptiste François Carlier was appointed executioner of Nantes at the tender age of three months.

If the office of executioner was bound by a kind of primogeniture, it was because the families had few alternatives. The very presence of the executioner and his family in everyday society was so feared that their lives were highly governed. Early modern cities enacted laws dictating nearly every aspect of the executioner's life, from where he could live to which buildings he could enter to whom he could touch.




*Engraving after a painting by J. Beys, Death of Robespierre: Who was guillotined in Paris the 28th July 1794, 1799. Bibliothèque Nacional de France (BNF) Engraving after a painting by J. Beys, Death of Robespierre: Who was guillotined in Paris the 28th July 1794, 1799. Bibliothèque Nacional de France (BNF)*

In most of Europe, executioners were prohibited from living in the urban areas they served. Apart from required attendance at church services, where they and their families were restricted to a designated pew, executioners only entered the city to perform tasks relating to their office. Those entailed the duties, of course, of torturing or killing the condemned, but they also included a variety of *basses oeuvres* with peculiar perks, such as the exclusive right to clean cesspools (and any valuables contained therein), the right to claim stray animals, and ownership over animal carcasses (and hence their profitable hides) that might litter the streets. Included in the *basses oeuvres* was a management role over other social pariahs, from whom the executioner could levy a tax, suggesting that he was a sort of sovereign of the underworld. In sixteenth-century Troyes, the executioner collected a one-time fee of five *sous* from prostitutes and one *liar* from lepers.

But if the dirty work of scavenging lined the executioners' pockets, then the *droit de havage* (literally the "right to dip into") made them wealthy. *Droit de havage* entitled executioners to portions of goods and produce from nearly every vendor in the marketplace and each cart that passed through the city gates. Such a bounty of food and

Bibliothèque Nacional de France (BNF)

wine was meant to ease the ostracized lives of the executioner and his family, to provide them with financial comfort where there was little other comfort to be had. No doubt it earned the scorned group even more scorn; many citizens assumed that the executioner took lives as casually as they took havage. It certainly didn't help that the *droit de havage*, a de facto tax, was a right shared only with kings.

Executioners were not, as is sometimes assumed, boorish uneducated sociopaths who took pleasure in the killing and the limelight. Rather, they were largely literate and well-educated. Their education, like most tradesmen, was practical in nature. They were largely taught at home since executioners' families were forbidden from attending school (as a boy, Charles-Henri Sanson attempted to attend school but was expelled after a classmate recognized his family). An executioner's education entailed a rudimentary knowledge of his locality's justice system, order and rituals, as well as his role within them.

Most importantly, the executioner's education included extensive instruction in human anatomy. Indeed, the executioner's knowledge of the human body was so renowned that their services were often demanded in place of a physician. The author of a 1908 entry in the *British Medical Journal* noted, "On July 24, 1579 a license was issued by Frederick II to Anders Freimut, executioner of Copenhagen, granting him the right to set bones and treat old wounds though he was expressly forbidden to meddle with recent wounds," adding that "in 1695, Andreas Liebknecht the Copenhagen executioner, was in such repute for his treatment of the venereal disease that he wrote a book on the subject."



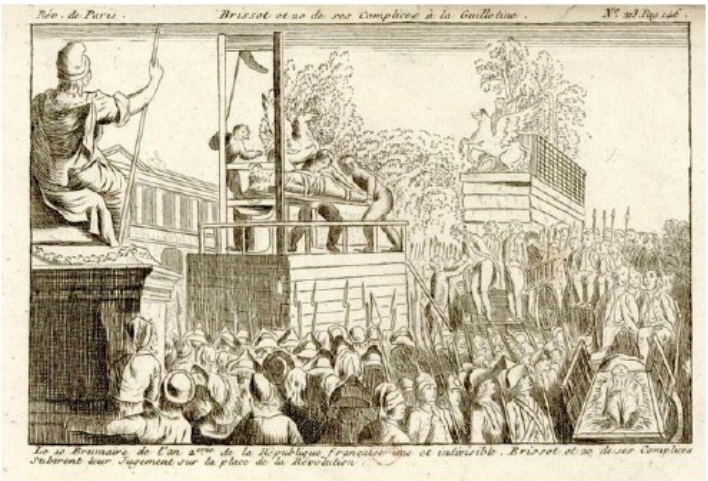
*The Execution of Ravaillac, c. 1610. BNF BNF*

While the executioner's knowledge of anatomy engendered these ironic side jobs, it was acquired with a singular purpose: efficiency. Each was judged on his meticulous ability to carry out a death sentence while avoiding the excessively bloody spectacle of a botched execution. Public executions—by sword, fire or wheel—were the culmination of a theatrical performance through which the crown enacted its deadly authority. The performance of justice needed to be seamless enough to appear natural—any disruption might be interpreted by the gathered crowd as an intervening act of God, a repudiation of the divine rite of kings. Hence it needed to be expertly enacted. To botch the highly choreographed routine was seen as an affront to justice.

To botch could also be life-threatening. In some German towns "an executioner was permitted three strikes (really) before being grabbed by the crowd and forced to die in place of the poor sinner," Joel F. Harrington notes in his book, *The Faithful Executioner*. Though never written in law, most cities throughout France were similarly intolerant of a botched execution. To avoid becoming victims of their audiences, executioners sought out the most efficient means of swift death. Frantz Schmidt, sixteenth-century executioner of Nuremburg, boasted in his journal that he successfully abolished the traditional punishment of drowning women convicted of infanticide in a sack in the local river. Schmidt replaced the archaic punishment with beheading, arguing that it was more economical and a deterrent to women who might have been plotting a similar crime.

Likewise, in the midst of the French Revolution, as Charles-Henri Sanson struggled to keep up with death's high demand, he warned the 1791 National Assembly that beheading by sword was an inexact skill. "Swords," he noted laconically, "have very often broken in the performance of such executions."

The heavy workload had already cost Sanson his younger son, Gabriel, who upon displaying a decapitated head slipped in its pooling blood, fell from the scaffold, and met an untimely death. Afterward Sanson became one of the most vocal advocates for of Joseph-Ignace Guillotin's new invention, calling it a "fine machine." Sanson tested the new-fangled death machine on live sheep and calves, then on the corpses of women and children. During his trials he found the cuts of the machine were not as clean on male corpses, and his observations prompted a redesign. Only after Sanson declared himself satisfied with the redesign did the guillotine become synonymous with the French Revolution. It was with that machine that he would execute thousands of citizens, including Louis XVI and Charlotte Corday.



*Brissot et 20 de ses complices à la guillotine ["Brissot and twenty of his accomplices at the guillotine"], 1793 BNF BNF*

The invention of the guillotine forever changed the nature of executions. As technological innovations often do, it eliminated the human hand and snatched the art of killing away from the executioner. The assembly line-like nature of the guillotine, its ability to execute hundreds in a single day without human fatigue or error, made the executioner an automaton, a simple button-pusher. The executioner became a near-relic; there was no longer any need for a highly-trained executioner who benefited from years of accumulated family knowledge. By the nineteenth century, the ostracized dynasties of Europe's executioner had been all but disassembled.

There were hold-outs, of course, Albert Pierrepoint continued his family's work in England, but his work was not nearly as spectacular as his forefathers' had been. He maintained the executioner's professionalism, outlining the exacting techniques he employed to make his hangings as smooth as possible—from "a rehearsal" to exhaustive measurements of the condemned—but if Pierrepoint had botched his work, there would be no threatening crowd to take notice.

Pierrepoint's work was done in private, hidden behind the grim walls of the country's main prison. Great Britain outlawed public execution in 1868 (though France would not outlaw public executions until the twentieth century, executions were moved from public squares to the prison courtyard making them harder and harder to witness). It's hard to say why the public had lost its taste for the executioners' meticulous work; perhaps it was a hangover from

the bloody spectacles of the French Revolution, perhaps it was the privatization of the nineteenth century, with its preference for the warm corners of domestic drawing rooms. Perhaps the guillotine's mechanization of death seemed too easily brutal.



*Engraved by L. Massard, L'exécuteur des hautes oeuvres sous Louis XV (époque de Charles-Henri Sanson) , from the book Les Français sous la Révolution , 1843. Wikimedia Commons*
*Engraved by L. Massard, L'exécuteur des hautes oeuvres sous Louis XV (époque de Charles-Henri Sanson) , from the book Les Français sous la Révolution , 1843. Wikimedia Commons*
*Engraved by L. Massard, L'exécuteur des hautes oeuvres sous Louis XV (époque de Charles-Henri Sanson) , from the book Les Français sous la Révolution , 1843. Wikimedia Commons*
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The office of executioner was slowly phased out after World War II. As moral economies of punishment shifted, deterrence and reformation began to vie with one another. And after the requisite war criminals had been tried and executed, reformation triumphed and European nations began outlawing capital punishment. The last of his kind, Pierrepoint, happily left his family's work behind him in in 1956 (the United Kingdom would abolish the death penalty in 1969), opened a pub and wrote an autobiography. "I do not now believe," he wrote in his 1974 memoir, *Executioner: Pierrepoint*, "that any one of the hundreds of executions I carried out has in any way acted as a deterrent against future murder. Capital punishment, in my view, achieved nothing except revenge."

What remains of the history of the executioner is his professionalism; his ability to efficiently manage the spectacle of death, to make his work seem like justice's natural route, and to above all avoid disruption or botching. Like the throngs that gathered to witness the work of Charles-Henri Sanson or the beheading of Thomas Cromwell, we do not question the executioner's purpose—to kill the condemned—only the cruelty of his methods.

Stassa Edwards is a writer in the Deep South.

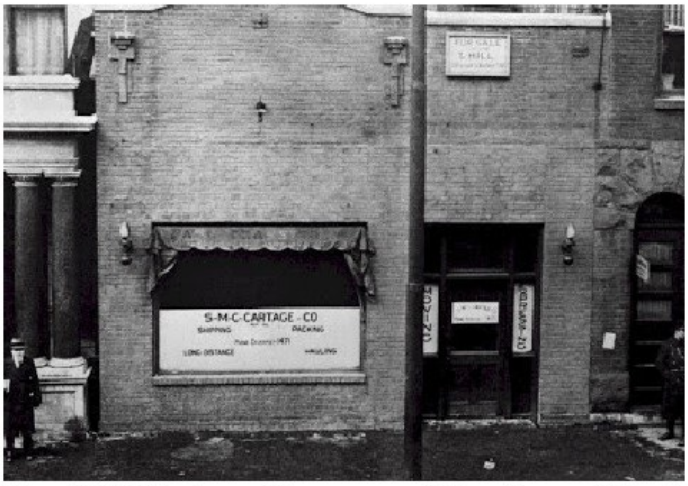
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**Wednesday, February 13, 2013**

## A VALENTINE FOR BUGS
### The Aftermath of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre

On this date in 1929, the infamous St. Valentine's Day Massacre took place at the S-M-C Cartage Company building at 2122 North Clark Street in Chicago. In a few moments of savage gunfire, Al Capone effectively wiped out the resistance from the remnants of the North Side mob, founded by Dean O'Banion and by 1929, in the hands of George "Bugs" Moran. On that cold winter morning, Capone missed Moran but managed to kill six other members of the North Side gang, as well as an optometrist who was a friend of the gangsters.



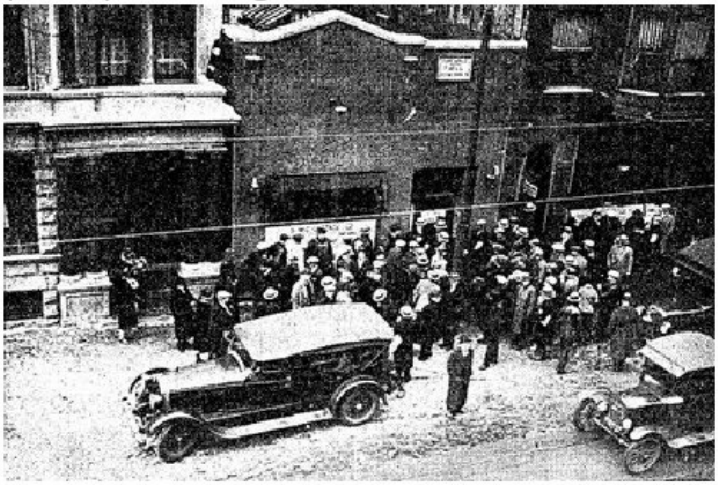

**The SMC Cartage Company at the time of the Massacre in February 1929.**

For today's, history post, though, we're going to take a look at what happened at 2122 North Clark Street AFTER the massacre took place on February 14.

We will never know for certain what took place inside of the SMC Cartage Co. on the cold morning of February 14, 1929. Only one man survived the initial slaughter and he never talked. However, historians and crime enthusiasts have spent many years trying to put together the pieces of one of the greatest (technically) unsolved crimes in history. It ended with seven men dead, a flurry of accusations and a blight on the property that never lifted.



**The bloody aftermath of the massacre**
**(Below) A crowd gathered outside to witness the carnage inside the garage.**



Chicago, in its own way, memorialized the warehouse on Clark Street where the massacre took place. It became a tourist attraction and the newspapers even printed the photos of the corpses upside-down so that readers would not have to turn their papers around to identify the bodies.

Right after the massacre, the SMC Cartage Company was temporarily boarded up. The building had been leased by Moran gang associate Adam Heyer but was owned by Frank C. Brusky, who moved his own trucking firm (Brusky Overland Movers) into the space in 1930. When he did, he renovated the building, installed two more windows and added space for storage on the second floor.



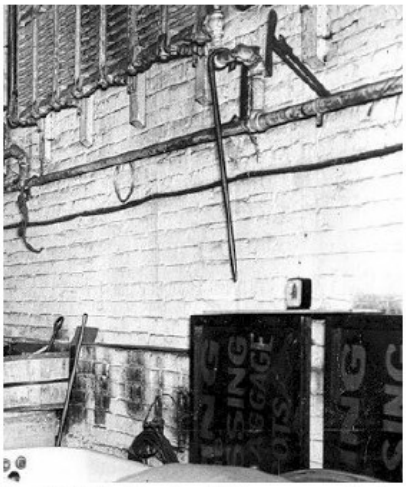
**The building as it looked in 1930, when it was boarded up.**

During the renovations, Brusky discovered a trap door in the corrugated ceiling of the garage, directly above the spot where the Moran gangsters were killed. The door led to a concrete chamber nestled against the second floor wall that was undetectable from below. The chamber contained funnels, a stool, an alcohol hydrometer, a crate that could contain a five-gallon bottle of liquor and a block and tackle system that could lower the crate to the floor of the garage. Brusky called the police, who searched the premises again. They first believed the secret room to be torture chamber but Police Captain Thomas Condon concluded that it was merely an alcohol cache.

By 1935, the building was occupied by Red Ball Movers, Inc., a moving company that also did telephone directory pick-ups and exchanges each year. In 1936, it was purchased by Anaconda Van Lines, which was owned by Samuel J. McArthur.




**The building in the 1950s, when it was the Werner's storage company.**
**(Below) The Infamous wall where the massacre took pace during the time when the building was owned by the Werners. They were frequently harassed by people wanting to take a look at the wall.**



In 1949, the building was taken over by Charles and Alma Werner, who turned it into a moving, packing, shipping and storage office for antique furniture. At the time, they had no idea of the buildings' bloody past. They soon found that tourists, curiosity-seekers and crime buffs visited the place much more often than customers, all of them asking to see the infamous wall in back. Depending on her mood, Mrs. Werner either turned them away or allowed them to take a look. She once stated that she wished she and her husband had never bought the building. The Werners were later bought out by the city of Chicago, who wanted the place torn down and replaced with apartments for the elderly.

In 1967, the building was demolished. However, the bricks from the bullet-pocked rear wall were preserved and purchased by a Canadian businessman named George Patey. The bricks were packed and shipped across the border and then put together as the main attraction for a traveling crime show that was displayed at shopping centers, museums and galleries. The show was only a moderate success so, in 1971, Patey opened a Roaring Twenties themed nightclub called the Banjo Palace and rebuilt the wall, for some strange reason, in the men's restroom. Three nights a week, women were allowed to peek inside at this macabre attraction. To make matters even more bizarre, a sheet of clear acrylic was placed in front of the wall so that patrons could urinate and try and hit targets that were painted on the glass. The club closed down in 1976 and the 417 bricks that made up the back wall were placed in storage until 1997.



**Businessman George Patey with the infamous bricks**

Patey tried offering the wall for sale, along with a written account of the massacre but had trouble selling the entire wall in one piece. Patey, along with a friend named Guy Whitford (who contacted me about the wall in 2002) tried to sell the single piece for some time, without success. The original lot came with a diagram that explained how to restore the wall to its original form. The bricks were even numbered to facilitate reassembly. They remained on the market for several years, but there were no buyers. Eventually, Patey broke up the set and began selling them one brick at a time for $1,000 each. Patey died in December 2004, by which time he had sold most of the bricks. A large number of them are now on display at the crime museum that opened in Las Vegas last year.

But there are legends that say that Patey had some trouble selling some of the bricks. The stories say that some buyers returned their bricks soon after purchasing them. It seemed that anyone who bought one was suddenly stricken with bad luck in the form of illness, financial ruin, divorce and even death. According to the stories, the bricks had somehow been infested with the powerful negative energy of the massacre. This story has been dismissed as a “journalistic embellishment,” but there are many who maintain that it’s the truth. These same people insist that Patey’s 417 bricks were not the only surviving bricks from the warehouse.

In recent years, other bricks have emerged that are said to have come from the wall, or at least from the building itself. These were not bricks purchased from Patey; rather they were smuggled out of the lot by construction workers and curiosity-seekers. It was said that from these bricks, too, come the legends of misfortune and bad luck. Are these bricks authentic? The owners say they are, but the reader will have to judge for himself.

Whatever the legend of the bricks, and whether or not they were somehow "haunted" by the horrific murders, there is little doubt that the massacre site on Clark Street was haunted – at least for awhile.

For many years, people walking along the street, or who lived nearby, reported hearing the sounds of screams, moans, muffled voices and even the unmistakable thump-thump-thump of Tommy gun fire. The garage is long gone now, demolished in a misguided attempt by city officials to erase all vestiges of Chicago's gangster past.

A portion of the block was taken over by the Chicago Housing Authority and a fenced-in lawn that belongs to a senior citizens' development now marks the area where the garage once stood. Five trees are scattered about the site and the one in the center actually marks the point where the rear wall once stood, where Moran's men were lined up and mercilessly gunned down. The apartment building where Jeanette Landesman lived and where she heard the sound of the terrified German shepherd barking in the garage still stands but all remnants of the SMC Cartage Company have vanished. Or have they?



**This empty lot on Clark Street marks the site of the SMC Cartage Company. Small remnants of the building remain, like the tar line of the roof on the wall of the building next door, and bricks in the back alley that came from the garage.**

According to reports, residents of the senior housing complex built on one end of the lot have had strange encounters in the building, especially those who live on the side that faces the former massacre site. A television reporter from Canada interviewed a woman who once lived in an apartment that overlooked the small park area. She often complained that, at night, she would hear strange voices, sounds and knocking on her door and her window. She complained to the management, who dismissed her claims as imagination but assigned her another apartment. A new tenant moved into the rooms and she also complained of odd happenings, including knocking sounds on her door at night. When she opened the door to see who was there, she never found anyone nearby. One night, the tenant stated that she saw a dark figure wearing an old fashioned-looking hat. He remained in place for a few moments and then faded away. Most of the strange phenomena experienced by the new tenant also faded away and soon eerie events either stopped completely or she became so used to them that they no longer bothered her anymore.

Outside, along Clark Street, passersby occasionally reported strange sounds, like weeping and moaning, and the indescribable feeling of fear as they walked past the former site of the garage. Skeptics tried to laugh this off, saying that the sounds were nothing more than the overactive imaginations of those who knew what once occurred on the site, but based on the reports of those who had no idea of the history of the place, something strange was apparently occurring.

Those who were accompanied by their dogs also reported their share of weirdness. The

animals seemed to be especially bothered by the section of lawn where the garage's rear wall once stood, sometimes barking and howling, sometimes whining in fear. Their sense of the tragedy that happened there many years ago seemed to be much greater than that of humans.

However, many believe that what dogs sensed at the site was not the human trauma experienced in the massacre, but rather the trauma that must have been experienced by Johnny May's German Shepherd, Highball. The poor animal must have been terrified by what occurred that morning, from the deafening sounds of the Tommy guns to the bloody slaying of his beloved owner. Tied to the front bumper of the truck, Highball had nowhere to run. It should be noted again that it was not the sound of machine-gun fire that alerted Mrs. Landesman to the horror inside the garage: it was the howling and barking of the dog.



**Johnny May's traumatized German Shepherd, Highball**

Tragically, Highball was so traumatized by the events of that morning that he had to be put down after the massacre. Chicago Sun reporter Russell V. Hamm, one of the first newsmen on the scene, said that the dog was never the same again. His bizarre behavior left the police no choice but to put him to death.

Could the animals that subsequently passed by this empty lot have sensed the trauma suffered by Highball so many years ago? As any ghost buff can tell you, it's the events of yesterday that create the hauntings of today and sometimes, those who lived in the past can leave a little piece of themselves behind to be experienced over and over again.

While the site of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre seems to be quiet today, the violent events of the city's gangster era still reverberate over time. Men like Al Capone, whether city officials want to admit it or not, left an indelible mark on Chicago. It seems that the events of St. Valentine's Day 1929 left one, too.

The ghosts of the massacre may not be still around today – but one of them made his presence known for many years after his death. He had a reason for staying behind and, according to his victim, haunted him to the grave.

**Want More? Then pick up my book BLOOD, GUNS & VALENTINES, which not only tells about the rise of Capone's power in the Chicago underworld, but details the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, who died, who was involved and who was the ghost that haunted Capone for the rest of his life. You get an autographed copy of the book at**

**from the website, or it's also available in a Kindle edition.**

Posted by Troy Taylor at 8:24 PM

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THE
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# THE ANIMISTIC VAMPIRE IN NEW ENGLAND

GEORGE R. STETSON

The belief in the vampire and the whole family of demons has its origin in the animism, spiritism, or personification of the barbarian, who, unable to distinguish the objective from the subjective, ascribes good and evil influences and all natural phenomena to good and evil spirits.

Mr Conway remarks of this vampire belief that "it is, perhaps, the most formidable survival of demonic superstition now existing in the world."

Under the names of vampire, were-wolf, man-wolf, nightmare, night-demon—in the Illyrian tongue *oupires*, or leeches; in modern Greek *broucolaques*, and in our common tongue ghosts, each country having its own peculiar designation—the superstitious of the ancient and modern world, of Chaldea and Babylonia, Persia, Egypt, and Syria, of Illyria, Poland, Turkey, Servia, Germany, England, Central Africa, New England, and the islands of the Malay and Polynesian archipelagoes, designate the spirits which leave the tomb, generally in the night, to torment the living.

The character, purpose, and manner of the vampire manifestations depend, like its designation, upon environment and the plane of culture.

All primitive peoples have believed in the existence of good and evil spirits holding a middle place between men and gods. Calmet lays down in most explicit terms, as he was bound to do by the canons of his church, the doctrine of angels and demons as a matter of dogmatic theology.

pressure, yielding. Dr ——— declares the superstition to be prevalent in all the isolated districts of southern Rhode Island, and that many instances of its survival can be found in the large centers of population. In the village now being considered known exhumations have been made in five families, in the village previously named in three families, and in two adjoining villages in two families. In 1875 an instance was reported in Chicago, and in a New York journal of recent date I read the following: "At Peukuhl, a small village in Prussia, a farmer died last March. Since then one of his sons has been sickly, and believing that the dead man would not rest until he had drawn to himself the nine surviving members of the family, the sickly son, armed with a spade, exhumed his father and cut off his head." It does not by any means absolutely follow that this barbarous superstition has a stronger hold in Rhode Island than in any other part of the country. Peculiar conditions have caused its manifestation and survival there, and similar ones are likely to produce it elsewhere. The singular feature is that it should appear and flourish in a native population which from its infancy has had the ordinary New England educational advantages; in a State having a larger population to the square mile than any in the Union, and in an environment of remarkable literacy and culture when compared with some other sections of the country. It is perhaps fortunate that the isolation of which this is probably the product, an isolation common in sparsely settled regions, where thought stagnates and insanity and superstition are prevalent, has produced nothing worse.

In neighboring Connecticut, within a few miles of its university town of New Haven, there are rural farming populations, fairly prosperous, of average intelligence, and furnished with churches and schools, which have made themselves notorious by murder, suicides, and numerous cases of melancholia and insanity.

Other abundant evidence is at hand pointing to the conclusion that the vampire superstition still retains its hold in its original habitat—an illustration of the remarkable tenacity and continuity of a superstition through centuries of intellectual progress from a lower to a higher culture, and of the impotency of the latter to entirely eradicate from itself the traditional beliefs, customs, habits, observances, and impressions of the former.

It is apparent that our increased and increasing culture, our

appreciation of the principles of natural, mental, and moral philosophy and knowledge of natural laws has no complete correlation in the decline of primitive and crude superstitions or increased control of the emotions or the imagination, and that to force a higher culture upon a lower, or to metamorphose or to perfectly control its emotional nature through education of the intellect, is equally impossible. The two cultures may, however, coexist, intermingling and in a limited degree absorbing from and retroacting favorably or unfavorably upon each other—trifling aberrations in the inexorable law which binds each to its own place.

The most enlightened and philosophic have, either apparent or secreted in their inmost consciousness, superstitious weaknesses—negative, involuntary, more or less barbaric, and under greater or lesser control in correspondence with their education, their present environment, and the degree of their development—in the control of the imagination and emotions. These in various degrees predominate over the understanding where reason is silent or its authority weakens.

Sónya Kovalévsky (1850–1890), one of the most brilliant mathematicians of the century, who obtained the Prix-Bordin from the French academy, " the greatest scientific honor ever gained by a woman," " whose love for mathematical and psychological problems amounted to a passion," and whose intellect would accept no proposition incapable of a mathematical demonstration, all her life maintained a firm belief in apparitions and in dreams as portents. She was so influenced by disagreeable dreams and the apparition of a demon as to be for some time thereafter obviously depressed and low-spirited.

A well known and highly cultured American mathematician recently said to me that his servant had seven years ago nailed a horseshoe over a house door, and that he had never had the courage to remove it.

There is in the Chemnitzer-Rocken Philosophie, cited by Grimm, a register of eleven or twelve hundred crude superstitions surviving in highly educated Germany. Buckle declared that " superstition was the curse of Scotland," and in this regard neither Germany nor Scotland are singular.

Of the origin of this superstition in Rhode Island or in other parts of the United States we are ignorant; it is in all proba-

bility an exotic like ourselves, originating in the mythographic period of the Aryan and Semitic peoples, although legends and superstitions of a somewhat similar character may be found among the American Indians.

The Ojibwas have, it is said, a legend of the ghostly man-eater. Mr Mooney, in a personal note, says that he has not met with any close parallel of the vampire myth among the tribes with which he is familiar. The Cherokees have, however, something analogous. There are in that tribe quite a number of old witches and wizards who thrive and fatten upon the livers of murdered victims. When some one is dangerously sick these witches gather invisibly about his bedside and torment him, even lifting him up and dashing him down again upon the ground until life is extinct. After he is buried they dig up the body and take out the liver to feast upon. They thus lengthen their own lives by as many days as they have taken from his. In this way they get to be very aged, which renders them objects of suspicion. It is not, therefore, well to grow old among the Cherokees. If discovered and recognized during the feast, when they are again visible, they die within seven days.

I have personal experience of a case in which a reputed medicine-man was left to die alone because his friends were afraid to come into the house on account of the presence of invisible witches.

Jacob Grimm* defines superstition as a persistence of individual men in views which the common sense or culture of the majority has caused them to abandon, a definition which, while within its limits sufficiently accurate, does not recognize or take account of the subtile, universal, ineradicable fear of or reverence for the supernatural, the mysterious, and unknown.

De Quincey has more comprehensively remarked that "superstition or sympathy with the invisible is the great test of man's nature as an earthly combining with a celestial. In superstition is the possibility of religion, and though superstition is often injurious, degrading, and demoralizing, it is so, not as a form of corruption or degradation, but as a form of non-development."

In reviewing these cases of psychologic pre-Raphaelitism they seem, from an economic point of view, to form one of the strongest

*Teutonic Mythology.

as well as weirdest aguments in favor of a general cremation of the dead that it is possible to present. They also remind us of the *boutade* of the Saturday Review, "that to be really mediæval, one should have no body; to be really modern, one should have no soul;" and it will be well to remember that if we do not quite accept these demonic apparitions we shall subject ourselves to the criticism of that modern mystic, Dr Carl du Prel, who thus speaks of those who deny the miraculousness of stigmatization: "For these gentlemen the bounds of possibility coincide with the limits of their niggardly horizon; that which they cannot grasp either does not exist or is only the work of illusion and deception."

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HONEY SUPERSTITIONS.—Honey is believed to have power over spirits because honey is one of the earliest foods, yields an intoxicating drink, has many healing virtues, and prevents corruption. Old honey is a cure for cough, wind, and bile. It also increases strength and virility. Honey is used by the Hindus for washing their household gods. The Dekhan Brahman father drops honey into the mouth of his new-born child. Among higher class Hindus, especially among Brahmans, when a child is born honey is dropped into its mouth from a gold spoon or ring. Among Dekhan Hindus, when the bridegroom comes to the bride's house honey and curds are given him to sip. This honey-sipping is called *madhuparka;* its apparent object is to scare evil from the bridegroom. Honey is considered by the Hindus a great cleanser and purifier. It is also the food of their gods. In Bengal the Braham bride has part of her body anointed with honey. How highly the early Hindus valued honey appears from the hymn, "Let the winds pour down honey, the rivers pour down honey, may our plants be sweet. May the night bring honey, and the dawn and the sky above the earth be full of honey!" This intense longing is probably for honey-ale, *madhu*, or mead. In Africa an intoxicating drink is made from honey. The Feloops of West Africa made a strong liquor out of honey, and the Hottentots are fond of honey beer. Mead made from honey was the favorite drink of the Norsemen. In England honeysuckle still keeps off witchcraft.—*J. M. Campbel in Indian Antiquary, Bombay, September, 1895.*

The early Christians were possessed, or obsessed, by demons, and the so-called demoniacal possession of idiots, lunatics, and hysterical persons is still common in Japan, China, India, and Africa, and instances are noted in western Europe, all yielding to the methods of Christian and pagan exorcists as practiced in New Testament times.

The Hebrew synonym of demon was serpent; the Greek, diabolus, a calumniator, or impure spirit. The Rabbins were divided in opinion, some believing they were entirely spiritual, others that they were corporeal, capable of generation and subject to death.

As before suggested, it was the general belief that the vampire is a spirit which leaves its dead body in the grave to visit and torment the living.

The modern Greeks are persuaded that the bodies of the excommunicated do not putrefy in their tombs, but appear in the night as in the day, and that to encounter them is dangerous.

Instances are cited by Calmet, in Christian antiquity, of excommunicated persons visibly arising from their tombs and leaving the churches when the deacon commanded the excommunicated and those who did not partake of the communion to retire. The same writer states that "it was an opinion widely circulated in Germany that certain dead ate in their tombs and devoured all they could find about them, including their own flesh, accompanied by a certain piercing shriek and a sound of munching and groaning."

A German author has thought it worth while to write a work entitled "*De Masticatione mortuorum in tumulis.*" In many parts of England a person who is ill is said to be "wisht" or "overlooked." The superstition of the "evil eye" originated and exists in the same degree of culture; the evil eye "which kills snakes, scares wolves, hatches ostrich eggs, and breeds leprosy." The Polynesians believed that the vampires were the departed souls, which quitted the grave, and grave idols, to creep by night into the houses and devour the heart and entrails of the sleepers, who afterward died.*

The *Karems* tell of the *Kephu*, which devours the souls of men who die. The *Mintira* of the Malay peninsula have their water demon, who sucks blood from men's toes and thumbs.

* Foster's Observations During a Voyage Around the World.

"The first theory of the vampire superstitions," remarks Tylor,* "is that the soul of the living man, often a sorcerer, leaves its proper body asleep and goes forth, perhaps in the visible form of a straw or fluff of down, slips through the keyhole, and attacks a living victim. Some say these *Mauri* come by night to men, sit upon their breasts, and suck their blood, while others think children are alone attacked, while to men they are nightmares.

"The second theory is that the soul of a dead man goes out from its buried body and sucks the blood of living men; the victim becomes thin, languid, bloodless, and, falling into a rapid decline, dies."

The belief in the *Obi* of Jamaica and the Vaudoux or Vodun of the west African coast, Jamaica, and Haiti is essentially the same as that of the vampire, and its worship and superstitions, which in Africa include child-murder, still survive in those parts, as well as in several districts among the negro population of our southern states. The negro laid under the ban of the Obi or who is vaudouxed or, in the vernacular, "hoodooed" slowly pines to death.

In New England the vampire superstition is unknown by its proper name. It is there believed that consumption is not a physical but a spiritual disease, obsession, or visitation; that as long as the body of a dead consumptive relative has blood in its heart it is proof that an occult influence steals from it for death and is at work draining the blood of the living into the heart of the dead and causing his rapid decline.

It is a common belief in primitive races of low culture that disease is caused by the revengeful spirits of man or other animals—notably among some tribes of North American Indians as well as of African negroes.

Russian superstition supposes nine sisters who plague mankind with fever. They lie chained up in caverns, and when let loose pounce upon men without pity.†

As in the financial and political, the psychologic world has its periods of exaltation and depression, of ebb and flow, of confidence and alarm. In the eighteenth century a vampire panic beginning in Servia and Hungary spread thence into northern

* Primitive Culture.

† Cited from Göize's Russ., Volkls., p 62.

and western Europe, acquiring its new life and impetus from the horrors attending the prevalence of the plague and other distressing epidemics in an age of great public moral depravity and illiteracy. Calmet, a learned Benedictine monk and abbé of Sénones, seized this opportunity to write a popular treatise on the vampire, which in a short time passed through many editions. It was my good fortune not long since to find in the Boston Athenæum library an original copy of his work. Its title-page reads as follows: "Traité sur les apparitions des esprits et sur les vampires ou les revenans de Hongrie, de Moravie, etc. Par le R. P. Dom Augustine Calmet, abbé de Sénones. Nouvelle edition, revisée, corregie, et augmentie par l'auteur, avec une lettre de Mons le Marquis Maffei, sur la magie. A Paris: Chez debure l'aine quay des Augustins à l'image S. Paul. MDCCLI. Avec approb et priv du roi."

Calmet was born in Lorraine, near Commercy, in 1672, and his chief works were a commentary and history of the Bible. He died as the abbé of Sénones, in the department of the Vosges.

This curious treatise has evidently proved a mine of wealth to all modern encyclopedists and demonologists. It impresses one as the work of a man whose mental convictions do not entirely conform to the traditions and dogmas of his church, and his style at times appears somewhat apologetic. Calmet declares his belief to be that the vampires of Europe and the brucolaques of Greece are the excommunicated which the grave rejects. They are the dead of a longer or shorter time who leave their tombs to torment the living, sucking their blood and announcing their appearance by rattling of doors and windows. The name vampire, or *d'oupires*, signifies in the Slavonic tongue a bloodsucker. He formulates the three theories then existing as to the cause of these appearances:

First: That the persons were buried alive and naturally leave their tombs.

Second: That they are dead, but that by God's permission or particular command they return to their bodies for a time, as when they are exhumed their bodies are found entire, the blood red and fluid, and their members soft and pliable.

Third: That it is the devil who makes these apparitions appear and by their means causes all the evil done to men and animals.

In some places the specter appears as in the flesh, walks, talks, infests villages, ill uses both men and beasts, sucks the blood of their near relations, makes them ill, and finally causes their death.

The late Monsieur de Vassimont, counselor of the chamber of the courts of Bar, was informed by public report in Monravia that it was common enough in that country to see men who had died some time before "present themselves in a party and sit down to table with persons of their acquaintance without saying a word and nodding to one of the party, the one indicated would infallibly die some days after."*

About 1735 on the frontier of Hungary a dead person appeared after ten years' burial and caused the death of his father. In 1730 in Turkish Servia it was believed that those who had been passive vampires during life became active after death; in Russia, that the vampire does not stop his unwelcome visits at a single member of a family, but extends his visits to the last member, which is the Rhode Island belief.

The captain of grenadiers in the regiment of Monsieur le Baron Trenck, cited by Calmet, declares "that it is only in their family and among their own relations that the vampires delight in destroying their species."

The inhabitants of the island of Chio do not answer unless called twice, being persuaded that the brucolaques do not call but once, and when so called the vampire disappears, and the person called dies in a few days. The classic writers from Sophocles to Shakespeare and from Shakespeare to our own time have recognized the superstition.

Mr Conway quotes from the legend of Ishtar descending to Hades to seek some beloved one. She threatens if the door be not opened—

> "I will raise the dead to be devourers of the living;
> Upon the living shall the dead prey."†

Singularly, in his discourse on modern superstitions De Quincey, to whom crude superstitions clung and who had faith in dreams as portents, does not allude to the vampire; but his contemporary, Lord Byron, in his lines on the opening of the

* Cited by Calmet.
† Tablet K 162, in British Museum.

royal tomb at Windsor, recognizes this belief in the transformation of the dead:

> "Justice and death have mixed their dust in vain,
> Each royal vampire wakes to life again."

William of Malmsbury says that "in England they believed that the wicked came back after death by the will of the devil;" and it was not an unusual belief that those whose death had been caused in this manner, at their death pursued the same evil calling. Naturally under such an uncomfortable and inconvenient infliction some avenue of escape must, if possible, be found. It was first necessary to locate the vampire. If on opening the grave of a "suspect" the body was found to be of a rose color, the beard, hair, and nails renewed, and the veins filled, the evidence of its being the abode of a vampire was conclusive. A voyager in the Levant in the seventeenth century is quoted as relating that an excommunicated person was exhumed and the body found full, healthy, and well disposed and the veins filled with the blood the vampire had taken from the living. In a certain Turkish village, of forty persons exhumed seventeen gave evidence of vampirism. In Hungary, one dead thirty years was found in a natural state. In 1727 the bodies of five *religieuse* were discovered in a tomb near the hospital of Quebec, that had been buried twenty years, covered with flesh and suffused with blood.*

The methods of relief from or disposition of the vampire's dwelling place are not numerous, but extremely sanguinary and ghastly.

In Servia a relief is found in eating of the earth of his grave and rubbing the person with his blood. This prescription was, however, valueless if after forty days the body was exhumed and all the evidences of an archivampire were not found. A more common and almost universal method of relief, especially in the Turkish provinces and in the Greek islands, was to burn the body and scatter the ashes to the winds. Some old writers are of the opinion that the souls of the dead cannot be quiet until the entire body has been consumed. Exceptions are noted in the Levant, where the body is cut in pieces and boiled in wine, and where, according to Voltaire, the heart is torn out and burned.

* Cited by Calmet.

In Hungary and Servia, to destroy the demon it was considered necessary to exhume the body, insert in the heart and other parts of the defunct, or pierce it through with a sharp instrument, as in the case of suicides, upon which it utters a dreadful cry, as if alive; it is then decapitated and the body burned. In New England the body is exhumed, the heart burned, and the ashes scattered. The discovery of the vampire's resting-place was itself an art.

In Hungary and in Russia they choose a boy young enough to be certain that he is innocent of any impurity, put him on the back of a horse which has never stumbled and is absolutely black, and make him ride over all the graves in the cemetery. The grave over which the horse refuses to pass is reputed to be that of a vampire."

Gilbert Stuart, the distinguished American painter, when asked by a London friend where he was born, replied: "Six miles from Pottawoone, ten miles from Poppasquash, four miles from Conanicut, and not far from the spot where the famous battle with the warlike Pequots was fought." In plainer language, Stuart was born in the old snuff mill belonging to his father and Dr Moffat, at the head of Petaquamscott pond, six miles from Newport, across the bay, and about the same distance from Narragansett Pier, in the state of Rhode Island.

By some mysterious survival, occult transmission, or remarkable atavism, this region, including within its radius the towns of Exeter, Foster, Kingstown, East Greenwich, and others, with their scattered hamlets and more pretentious villages, is distinguished by the prevalence of this remarkable superstition—a survival of the days of Sardanapalus, of Nebuchadnezzar, and of New Testament history in the closing years of what we are pleased to call the enlightened nineteenth century. It is an extraordinary instance of a barbaric superstition outcropping in and coexisting with a high general culture, of which Max Müller and others have spoken, and which is not so uncommon, if rarely so extremely aggravated, crude, and painful.

The region referred to, where agriculture is in a depressed condition and abandoned farms are numerous, is the tramping-ground of the book agent, the chromo peddler, the patent-medicine man and the home of the erotic and neurotic modern novel. The social isolation away from the larger villages is as complete

as a century and a half ago, when the boy Gilbert Stuart tramped the woods, fished the streams, and was developing and absorbing his artistic inspirations, while the agricultural and economic conditions are very much worse.*

Farm-houses deserted and ruinous are frequent, and the once productive lands, neglected and overgrown with scrubby oak, speak forcefully and mournfully of the migration of the youthful farmers from country to town. In short, the region furnishes an object-lesson in the decline of wealth consequent upon the prevalence of a too common heresy in the district that land will take care of itself, or that it can be robbed from generation to generation without injury, and suggests the almost criminal neglect of the conservators of public education to give instruction to our farming youth in a more scientific and more practical agriculture. It has been well said by a banker of well known name in an agricultural district in the midlands of England that "the depression of agriculture is a depression of brains." Naturally, in such isolated conditions the superstitions of a much lower culture have maintained their place and are likely to keep it and perpetuate it, despite the church, the public school, and the weekly newspaper. Here Cotton Mather, Justice Sewall, and the host of medical, clerical, and lay believers in the uncanny superstitions of bygone centuries could still hold high carnival.

The first visit in this farming community of native-born New Englanders was made to ———, a small seashore village possessing a summer hotel and a few cottages of summer residents not far from Newport—that Mecca of wealth, fashion, and nineteenth-century culture. The ——— family is among its well-to-do and most intelligent inhabitants. One member of this family had some years since lost children by consumption, and by common report claimed to have saved those surviving by exhumation and cremation of the dead.

In the same village resides Mr ———, an intelligent man, by

* Rhode Island has the largest population to the square mile of any State in the Union The town of *Exeter*, before mentioned, incorporated in 1742–'43, had but 17 persons to the square mile in 1890, and in 1893 had 63 abandoned farms, or one-fifth of the whole number within its limits. *Foster*, incorporated in 1781 and taken from Scituate (which was settled by Massachusetts emigrants in 1710), had in 1890 a population of 1,252, and in 1893 had eight abandoned farms, Scituate having forty-five. *North Kingston* had 76 persons to the square mile in 1890. Mr Arnold, in his history of the State, says that "South Kingston was in 1780 by far the wealthiest town in the State." It had a special provision made for the "maintenance of religion and education."

trade a mason, who is a living witness of the superstition and of the efficacy of the treatment of the dead which it prescribes. He informed me that he had lost two brothers by consumption. Upon the attack of the second brother his father was advised by Mr ———, the head of the family before mentioned, to take up the first body and burn its heart, but the brother attacked objected to the sacrilege and in consequence subsequently died. When he was attacked by the disease in his turn, ———'s advice prevailed, and the body of the brother last dead was accordingly exhumed, and, "living" blood being found in the heart and in circulation, it was cremated, and the sufferer began immediately to mend and stood before me a hale, hearty, and vigorous man of fifty years. When questioned as to his understanding of the miraculous influence, he could suggest nothing and did not recognize the superstition even by name. He remembered that the doctors did not believe in its efficacy, but he and many others did. His father saw the brother's body and the arterial blood. The attitude of several other persons in regard to the practice was agnostic, either from fear of public opinion or other reasons, and their replies to my inquiries were in the same temper of mind as that of the blind man in the Gospel of Saint John (9 : 25), who did not dare to express his belief, but "answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

At ———, a small isolated village of scattered houses in a farming population, distant fifteen or twenty miles from Newport and eight or ten from Stuart's birthplace, there have been made within fifty years a half dozen or more exhumations. The most recent was made within two years, in the family of ———. The mother and four children had already succumbed to consumption, and the child most recently deceased (within six months) was, in obedience to the superstition, exhumed and the heart burned. Dr ———, who made the autopsy, stated that he found the body in the usual condition after an interment of that length of time. I learned that others of the family have since died, and one is now very low with the dreaded disease. The doctor remarked that he had consented to the autopsy only after the pressing solicitation of the surviving children, who were patients of his, the father at first objecting, but finally, under continued

**The story of Abhartach, a cruel, deformed and evil Irish chieftain, suggests a possible link between Irish vampire myths and Bram Stoker's Dracula.**

People over the years have thought that Dracula was based on that old Romanian prince, Vlad the Impaler, who had a nasty habit of killing those who opposed him in a rather bloodthirsty manner. However, the truth may be closer to home.

In the north Derry area, between the towns of Garvagh and Dungiven, in a district known as Glenullin, the glen of the eagle, we may find a clue to Dracula's origins. In the middle of a field in the remote townland of Slaughtaverty is an area known locally as the 'Giant's Grave' but it might be more accurately described as Abhartach's tomb.

On the grave there is a curling thorn bush, under which lies a large and heavy stone. Originally there were more stones, the remnants of an old monument, but these have been removed over time by local farmers for building purposes. However, there is little doubt that the tomb was once an imposing structure and that it gave the townland its name.

But who was Abhartach?

During the fifth and sixth centuries, the Glenullin area was a patchwork of petty kingdoms, each with its own local ruler or 'king'. These kings may have been little more than tribal warlords. There is ample evidence of their rule as the countryside is dotted with hill forts, ancient raths and early fortifications marking their respective territories. Abhartach, according to tradition, was one of these chieftains.

Local descriptions of him vary. Some say he was deformed in some way and others say that he was a dwarf. However, most accounts agree that he was a powerful wizard and was extremely evil. Abhartach was a jealous and suspicious man who trusted no one, not even his wife, who he was convinced was having an adulterous affair. He decided to catch her in the act. One night he climbed out one of the windows of their castle and crept along a ledge towards his wife's bedroom. However, either because of his deformity or poor balance, he slipped and fell to his death. His body was found the following morning and the people of the town quickly buried him. He was a high-ranking chieftain with the same rights as a king, so he was buried standing upright, which was the custom at the time. The following day, Abhartach returned and demanded that each of his subjects cut their wrist and gather the blood in a bowl. They were told to do this and deliver the blood to him each day in order to sustain his life. Too terrified to refuse, they did as he ordered.

Eventually, the people decided that they could not live in fear of Abhartach any longer. They hated him when he was alive, but now that he had returned as one of the marbh bheo, or the living dead, they were terrified of what he could do to them. They decided to hire an assassin to kill him. They persuaded another chieftain, Cathán, to perform the deed for them. Cathán slew Abhartach and buried him once again, standing up in an isolated grave. However, the following day Abhartach returned, as evil as ever, and once again demanded a

bowl of blood, drawn from the veins of his subjects, in order to sustain his vile corpse. In great terror, the people asked Cathán to slay him once more. This Cathán did, burying the corpse as before. However, the following day, Abhartach returned again, demanding the same gory tribute from his people.

Depending on which version of the folk tale you hear, Cathán was puzzled and consulted either a local druid or an early Christian saint about why Abhartach could not be killed. There are several 'hermitages' in the area. According to tradition, these were the dwellings of particularly holy men. The most notable is in Gortnamoyagh Forest on the very edge of Glenullin, where local people will still point out 'the saint's track', a series of stations near a holy well. Close by was said to have been the hermitage of a saint known as Eoghan, or John, who is credited with having founded a place of Christian worship in the area (the site is still known as Churchtown, although any related foundation has long since vanished).

A 'footprint' on a stony prominence in the forest is also attributed to this saint. It is said that from here he flew from Gortnamoyagh to say Mass in his own foundation. His name appears in several local place names, such as Killowen in Coleraine (about fifteen miles away) and Magilligan (about twenty miles away). It was to this Druid or saint that Cathán is believed to have gone. The venerable old man listened long and hard to the chieftain's tale. When Cathán had finished, the old man said to him, 'Abhartach is not really alive. Through his devilish arts he has become one of the undead. He has become a drinker of human blood. He can't actually be slain but he can be restrained.'

He then proceeded to give the astonished Cathán instructions as to how to 'suspend' the vampiric creature.

'Abhartach must be slain with a sword made from yew wood and must be buried upside down in the earth,' said the old man. 'Thorns and ash twigs must be sprinkled around him and a heavy stone must be placed directly on top of him. Should the stone be lifted, however, he will be free to walk the earth once more.'

Cathán returned to Glenullin and did what the holy man had told him. Abhartach was slain with a wooden sword and buried upside down. Thorns were placed all around the gravesite. On top of the grave, Cathán built a great tomb which could be seen for miles around. This has now vanished but the stone remains and a tree, which grew from the scattered thorns, rises above it.

The land on which the grave is situated has acquired a rather sinister reputation over the years. Locally it is considered to be 'bad ground' and has been the subject of a number of family disagreements. In 1997, attempts were made to clear the land, but, if local tradition is to be believed, workmen who tried to fell the tree found that their brand-new chainsaw stopped for no reason on three occasions.

When attempting to lift the great stone, a steel chain suddenly snapped, cutting the hand of one of the labourers and, significantly, allowing blood to soak into the ground. Although legends still abound in the locality of the 'man who was buried three times' and the fantastic treasure that was buried with him, few local people will approach the grave, especially after

dark.

This, then, in essence is the legend with its folkloric additions. But is it simply an isolated tale or does it fit into a tradition of Irish tales of vampires? The spilling of blood was not uncommon amongst the ancient Irish – indeed animal blood was ritually let under Christian directive upon St Martin's Eve (11 November). The roots of this tradition undoubtedly go back to pagan times and may have a connection with the returning dead.

The horrors of the famine added considerably to the lore. The blood of pigs and cows supplemented a meagre diet, either drunk raw or made into relish cakes (a mixture of meal, vegetable tops and blood brought together in a kind of patty).

Although most cultures have vampire stories, such tales have a particular resonance in Ireland. Here, interest in and veneration of the dead seems to have played a central part in Celtic thinking. However, it was the historian and folklorist Patrick Weston Joyce who actually made connections between Abhartach and the Irish vampire tradition. Joyce enthusiastically recounted the legend in his own book A History of Ireland (1880). This was seventeen years before Dracula was published and it is believed that Stoker, then a Dublin civil servant, read Joyce's work (and presumably the Abhartach legend) with some relish. Around the same time, manuscript copies of Geoffrey Keating's History of Ireland, which made much of the undead, were placed on public display in the National Museum in Dublin. They were on loan from Trinity College Library (which possessed two manuscript copies) and the display included chapter ten on the undead. Although Stoker himself could not read Irish, he had many friends and acquaintances that did and he may have received at least part of the work in translation.

So there you have it. Could the legend of the vampire king, coupled with the strong tradition of blood-drinking Irish chieftains and nobles, be responsible for giving birth to the gothic tale of Count Dracula? Can we really consign the vampire to some remote part of Eastern Europe, where he is unlikely to do us any harm, or should we keep a clove of garlic handy?

From Irish Ghost Tales

*/* Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */.en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; } .en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

# An Evaluation of Remote Viewing: Research and Applications

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**Prepared by**
**The American Institutes for Research**

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## Program History

"Star Gate" is a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) program which involved the use of paranormal phenomena, primarily "remote viewing," for intelligence collection. During Star Gate's history, DIA pursued three basic program objectives: "Operations," using remote viewing to collect intelligence against foreign targets; "Research and Development," using laboratory studies to find new ways to improve remote viewing for use in the intelligence world; and "Foreign Assessment," the analysis of foreign activities to develop or exploit the paranormal for any uses which might affect our national security.

Prior to the advent of Star Gate in the early 1990s, the DIA, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and other government organizations conducted various other programs pursuing some or all of these objectives. CIA's program began in 1972, but was discontinued in 1977. DIA's direct involvement began about 1985 and has continued up to the time of this review. During the last twenty years, all government programs involving parapsychology have been viewed as highly controversial, high-risk, and have been subjected to various reviews.

In 1995, the CIA declassified its past parapsychology program efforts in order to facilitate a new, external review. In addition, CIA worked with DIA to continue declassification of Star Gate program documents, a process which had already begun at DIA. All relevant CIA an DIA program documents were collected and inventoried. In June of 1995, CIA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) then contracted with AIR for this external review, based on our long-standing expertise in carrying out studies relating to behavioral science issues and our neutrality with respect to the subject matter.

## Evaluation Objectives

The CIA asked AIR to address a number of key objectives during the technical review of Star Gate. These included:

assured of a successful outcome requires several hundred trials, and no student has the resources to commit to this experiment. As I have repeatedly tried to explain to Professor Hyman and others, when dealing with a small to medium effect it takes hundreds or sometimes thousands of trials to establish "statistical significance." In fact, the Physicians Health Study that initially established the link between taking aspirin and reducing heart attacks studied over 22,000 men. Had it been conducted on only 2,200 men with the same reduction in heart attacks, it would not have achieved statistical significance. Should students be required to recruit 22,000 participants and conduct such an experiment before we believe the connection between aspirin and heart attacks is real?

Despite Professor Hyman's continued protests about parapsychology lacking repeatability, I have never seen a skeptic attempt to perform an experiment with enough trials to even come close to insuring success. The parapsychologists who have recently been willing to take on this challenge have indeed found success in their experiments, as described in my original report.

## REFERENCE:

Schouten, Sybo (1993). "Are we making progress?" In Psi Research Methodology: A Re-examination, Proceedings of an International Conference, Oct 29-30, 1988, edited by L. Coly and J. McMahon, NY: Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., pgs. 295-322.

# Discussion

## Points of Agreement and Disagreement

The exchanges between Dr. Utts and Dr. Hyman has converged upon a number of issues bearing on the remote viewing research, and parapsychological research in general. In this chapter of the report, we summarize the major points of agreement and disagreement particularly as they pertain to the remote viewing laboratory experiments conducted as part of the current program. By adopting this more narrow focus, we are intentionally bypassing the evidence for remote viewing or other paranormal phenomena that have arguably been demonstrated in other paradigms (e.g., the autoganzfeld studies) or prior to the present set of laboratory studies. Our position is that the charter for the present evaluation is to examine the current program; evidence obtained by other researchers in other laboratories is not a direct component of this program.

Before beginning this discussion, we feel it important to recognize that, in our opinion, both review papers are of exceptional quality. One of Dr. Hyman's first comments about Dr. Utts' review was that he considered it perhaps the best defense of parapsychological research he had come across. We concur; likewise, we feel that Dr. Hyman's paper represents one of the clearest expressions of the skeptic position we have seen.

At the outset, it should be noted that the two reviewers agreed far more than they disagreed. One central point of agreement concerns the existence of a statistically significant effect: Both reviewers note that the evidence accrued to date in the experimental laboratory studies of remote viewing indicate that a statistically significant effect has been obtained. Likewise, they agree that the current (e.g., post-NRC review) experimental procedures contain significant improvements in methodology and experimental control.

The major remaining area of disagreement concerns attribution of causality. It is Dr. Hyman's position that existence of a statistically significant effect does not allow one to infer that

these laboratory experiments have provided an unequivocal demonstration of remote viewing. A statistically significant effect might arise from many sources; more simply stated, the results could have occurred for many different reasons. Until the reasons for the results can be pinpointed, one can not say that fully adequate evidence has been obtained for the existence of any phenomenon, including paranormal phenomena such as remote viewing. Typically, the process of identifying causes involves both eliminating competing explanations and developing and testing, in Dr. Hyman's terms, "positive" hypotheses. Dr. Hyman states that these competing explanations have not been adequately eliminated; Dr. Utts believes that they have.

Our conclusion is that, although the remote viewing research has made substantial methodological progress in recent years, a central problem remains in the laboratory experiments conducted as part of the present program. The problem is that most if not all significant findings have been obtained by using the same remote viewers, the same judge, the same target set, and the same scoring procedures. This characteristic of the remote viewing research in the program raises the possibility of what has been termed "monomethod bias" – a factor limiting the confidence we can have in drawing conclusions about the generality utility of the phenomenon. Basically, the concept here is that a specific method could have some very subtle influences on performance that only appear over many repetitions or trials; these influences could have nothing to do with the phenomenon being investigated. Recognition of this point is why both reviewers stress the need for independent replication.

Another consequence of this experimental situation (the same remote viewers, etc.) is that it makes attribution of causation difficult. For example, one interpretation of the significant outcomes obtained is that the **judge** has the ability to influence the results of the remote viewing. As unlikely as this seems, this interpretation cannot be ruled out unless different judges are used.

Although this general problem was of some concern to the reviewers, both were more concerned about one specific aspect of the problem: The methods used in the current program to study remote viewing involve having a judge assess the degree of correspondence between the viewings and a set of targets. In the current studies, this judge has typically been the Principal Investigator, a person who has substantial familiarity with both the viewers and the research paradigm. In addition to the potential confounding noted above, this kind of procedure can potentially result in "criterion contamination"—some unconscious, nondeliberate influence on the

results in a particular direction. As a result, both reviewers stress the point that cross-judge agreement needs to be demonstrated: the studies need to be replicated using independent judges before strong statements can be made about the existence of remote viewing.

Another issue where there seems to be some remaining disagreement is a variant of the causation problem. Methodological problems are, of course, not the only reason a statistically significant effect might occur but still fail to provide evidence for the existence of a phenomenon. It is quite possible that an effect occurred for reasons other than the proposed cause. In other words, normal psychological processes rather than paranormal processes might account for the effects obtained in the remote viewing studies. Recognition of this fact led both reviewers to stress the point that more attention needs to be given to the identification of underlying causes in remote viewing research.

The reviewers however, differ somewhat in the way they would approach this issue. Dr. Utts believes that the existence of the phenomenon has been adequately demonstrated; therefore, the focus of future research should be on causative mechanisms ♦ how the ability works. Dr. Hyman takes the position that competing hypotheses have not yet been eliminated; thus, he stresses the continued need for replication in different laboratories, with different investigators, etc., so that causal mechanisms, specifically paranormal mechanisms, can be identified.

Our conclusion about this issue is direct: If laboratory research is to continue, this research must be conducted in such a way that causal mechanisms can be articulated, and that also serves to rule out competing explanations.

A final point of disagreement has to do with the nature of the remote viewing phenomenon itself. Dr. Hyman argues that the effect has not been readily replicated in other laboratory settings. Instead, it appears inconsistently, occurring only for certain people at certain times. He argues that the size of the observed effects are small, they do not consistently emerge under certain specified conditions, and that a coherent pattern of results has not been obtained in studies of remote viewing. At the risk of misrepresenting his position, the implication is that unless more is uncovered about the phenomenon, it is not likely to be a fruitful area for further research. Dr. Utts counters with a compelling argument, noting that many effects are statistical in

nature, occurring only rarely and under certain conditions. This should not preclude further research into the causes and operation of the phenomenon.

We agree with Dr. Utts that the conditions under which a phenomenon occurs should not determine whether or not it is worth exploring and pursuing scientifically. On the other hand, Dr. Hyman's observations point to a broader problem. If weak, inconsistent effects are obtained in a laboratory-based research program, it is open to question whether the phenomenon under investigation has any practical value. The anomaly may occur from time to time but it occurs in such an erratic fashion that it cannot be used to guide ones' actions. In this regard, we find some agreement between the two reviewers, both of whom question whether the kind of strong consistent effects needed for practical applications have been demonstrated.

## Conclusions from the Expert Reviews

In the preceding chapter we noted the points of agreement and disagreement among the reviewers. We tried furthermore to clarify and reconcile these points of agreement and disagreement. With this background in mind, we now return to the basic questions presented to the reviewers and attempt to draw some firm conclusions about the implications to be drawn from this research review.

The first question presented to the reviewers was whether the evidence indicated the presence of a statistically significant effect. This question was answered in a straightforward fashion: the reviewers agreed that, considered broadly, statistically significant effects have been obtained in these studies. It appears that viewers' descriptions produce hits more frequently than would be expected by chance.

The second question presented to the reviewers considers the nature of these effects. The question to be answered was whether the effects could be attributed to paranormal phenomena. In this regard, the reviewers disagreed, with Dr. Utts arguing positively and Dr. Hyman negatively. Our conclusion from the discussions is that ***direct evidence has not been provided indicating that this paranormal ability of the remote viewers is the source of these effects.*** Attribution in general is difficult to demonstrate; for the present set of laboratory experiments, a primary

concern for us is that the same viewers, the same judge, the same target set, and the same scoring procedures were repetitively used. This makes it difficult or impossible to localize the source of the phenomenon.

The third question presented to the panel asked whether we have obtained an adequate understanding of the phenomenon. Do we know how the ability, if it exists, works? Here it is clear that the present research program has failed to identify mechanisms explaining the source of these effects.

The fourth and final question presented to the reviewers was whether the research provides support for intelligence gathering operations. Here the magnitude of the observed effects, their consistency and replicability, and the need for subjective interpretation all seem to argue against potential applications.

Taken as a whole, these answers lead to relatively straightforward general conclusions:

- The laboratory research conducted as part of the present program has identified a statistically significant "anomaly."
- However, the experiments have not provided a convincing demonstration that a paranormal ability is involved.
- The research studies have not identified the nature and source of the effect.
- There is no evidence that the phenomenon would prove useful in intelligence gathering.

# Chapter Four: Evaluating the Utility of Remote Viewing in Intelligence Operations

In the preceding chapter, we presented several conclusions bearing on evidence for the existence of remote viewing and on the nature of the phenomenon. In this chapter, we will, for the moment, assume that the phenomenon does indeed exist. This leads to questions of the utility of the phenomenon for intelligence applications. As noted earlier, our evaluation of remote viewing in terms of its value to the intelligence community had three components:

- assessment of task requirements in relation to the boundary conditions believed to influence application of the phenomenon
- interviews with various participants in the program
- user assessments of the information provided by the remote viewing process

In this chapter, we consider each of these components.

## Research on Boundary Conditions

Historically, the literature on paranormal phenomena, and on remote viewing in particular, has paid relatively little attention to establishing boundary conditions—more specifically, the conditions under which effects are and are not observed. This point has been made in numerous earlier critiques of parapsychological research (Druckman & Swets, 1988;

Hyman, 1994; Swets & Bjork, 1990). In response to these critiques, several investigators have initiated research intended to provide more clear-cut evidence bearing on the conditions influencing when effects are and are not observed in parapsychological studies (Bem & Honorton, 1994; Honorton, 1994). Research on remote viewing reflects this same general trend. In fact, many of the studies conducted in recent years have expressly examined this issue (May, Luke, & James, 1994; May, Luke & Lantz, 1993).

**Senders and Distance.** When one considers the remote viewing paradigm, one boundary condition immediately comes to the fore with regard to intelligence applications. During information gathering, it is unlikely that a "beacon" or sender will be at the site. In fact, the interviews with end users and the remote viewers indicate that only in the case of missing persons is a sender likely to be involved in information collection. If senders are necessary for the phenomenon to occur, its utility would be dramatically reduced.

The laboratory experiments conducted as part of the current program avoid this issue; since the targets are photographs kept in another part of the laboratory, the equivalent of a "sender" would be the laboratory assistant who retrieves the photograph (or the computer that selects it). If one considers a "sender" as either a transmitter of information or an active participant in the remote viewing, this paradigm essentially does not have one. However, a recent study by May, Spottswood, and James (1994) has specifically addressed this issue. Their findings indicate that significant remote reviewing effects are obtained even when senders are not available.

Another boundary condition that might influence the utility of remote viewing in intelligence collection is the distance of the target from the viewer. More specifically, for many of the tasks involved in intelligence applications, it may be impossible to place the viewer anywhere near the target. Thus, if the accuracy of remote viewing is limited by distance, this condition may, in turn, restrict its value. However, the work of May and his colleagues (May, Luke, & James, 1994; May, Luke, & Lantz, 1994) indicates that remote viewing may not be related to distance.

**Targets.** A set of studies conducted by Lantz, Luke, and May (1994) examined another boundary condition of particular importance when assessing potential applications of the remote viewing phenomenon. Most recent research on remote viewing has been based on a fixed set of

"static" targets, drawn from National Geographic photographs. Lantz, Luke, and May varied target type by including a new set of targets covering a wider range of novel stimuli, referred to as "dynamic" targets. Perhaps another relevant aspect of these new targets is that the remote viewers in the standard paradigm are very familiar with the National Geographic photographs, but were unfamiliar with the dynamic targets. The researchers found that significant effects were obtained for static but not dynamic targets.

This finding is of some importance from an operational intelligence perspective. In Appendix C, the interview reports, end users and remote viewers describe the operational targets presented to remote viewers. These targets represent a diverse set of potentially novel stimuli ranging from the location of ships to the likely background characteristics of a person. The findings obtained in the Lantz, Luke, and May study suggest that accurate viewings are less likely to be obtained for these dynamic "real-world" targets, a finding which, if replicated, represents a severe constraint on the utility of remote viewing to the intelligence community. Even if, as May, Spottswood, and James (1994) point out, those effects can be explained in terms of target "bandwidth," there is no reason to assume that intelligence targets will conform to a limited range of predefined bandwidths.

**Information Requirements and Specificity.** Another set of boundary conditions examined in recent studies considers the nature of the targets and the information to be assessed by ***judges.*** Intelligence consumers place a premium on the availability of specific, concrete, potentially verifiable information. On the other hand, the information obtained from remote viewings tends to be stated in broad, vague terms; a critical role must be played by judges or intelligence analysts, who must interpret the remote viewers' reports.

Recognizing this problem, a series of studies (May, Luke, & Lantz, 1993) were initiated intended to provide more concrete judgments framed in terms of the presence or absence of specific categories of objects, a technique referred to as "binary coding." Results from these studies indicated that when relatively specific information was used in judging matches, weak or insignificant effects were obtained.

Specificity, as a boundary condition, can also be assessed in terms of targets. This issue was examined in a meta-analysis (May, Luke, & Lantz, 1993) contrasting the effects obtained for

different types of targets. They found that effect sizes were related to target complexity, with more dynamic targets showing larger effect sizes. Incidentally, and seemingly in contradiction to the Lantz, Luke, and May (1994) study cited above, they found insignificant effects for static photograph targets. This pattern of effects, if intrinsic to the remote viewing process, would seem to limit applications to those involving more complex targets requiring less specific descriptions. Furthermore, it may also represent a significant limitation on applications of the remote viewing phenomenon where specific information is required.

Another aspect of specificity has to do with the degree of accuracy of the remote viewers' reports. Most remote viewing reports contain a large number of potentially interpretable components, an unknown percentage of which may not be related to the target. The end users cannot know which components are or are not related. This makes it difficult for end users, particularly if they are not highly trained, to separate valid information from irrelevant information, a problem that may prohibit effective operational applications of the results of the viewing process.

**Feedback.** Perhaps the most widely accepted boundary condition applying to remote viewing is the need for feedback. It is commonly held that the accuracy of viewings depends on the viewer receiving feedback following production of the viewing. In fact, one explanation of the remote viewing phenomenon is that viewings represent a form of precognition where the viewers identify future outcomes or events that they themselves will experience; in effect, they "communicate" with themselves across time (May, Lantz, & Piantineda, 1994). The important point here is that in "real-world" information gathering situations, it may be impossible for viewers to acquire the kind of feedback needed for accurate viewings.

**Remote Viewer Training.** A final boundary condition frequently noted in the literature on remote viewing pertains to the nature and development of the presumptive remote viewing ability. Typically, remote viewing is held to represent a relatively rare talent not widely distributed in the population. Recent studies have suggested that associative learning techniques may contribute to improved performance on remote viewing tasks (May, Luke & Lantz, 1993). However, little evidence is available indicating that the capacity for producing accurate viewings can be systematically developed. This has implications for information gathering operations, since

- a comprehensive evaluation of the research and development in this area, with a focus on the validity of the technical approach(es) according to acceptable scientific standards

- an evaluation of the overall program utility or usefulness to the government

  (The CIA believes that the controversial nature of past parapsychology programs within the intelligence community, and the scientific controversy clouding general acceptance of the validity of paranormal phenomena, demand that these two issues of utility and scientific validity be addressed separately.)

- consideration of whether any changes in the operational or research and development activities of the program might bring about improved results if the results were not already optimum

- develop recommendations for the CIA as to appropriate strategies for program activity in the future

We were directed to base our findings on the data and information provided as a result of DIA and CIA program efforts, since it was neither possible nor intended that we review the entire field of parapsychological research and its applications. Also, we would not review or evaluate the "Foreign Assessment" component of the program.

In the next chapter, we present our methodology for conducting the evaluation. A major component of the evaluation was to commission two nationally-regarded experts to review the program's relevant research studies; their findings are presented in Chapter 3, along with our analysis of areas of agreement and disagreement. In Chapter 4, we present our findings concerning the operational component of the program. Finally, in Chapter 5 we present our conclusions and recommendations.

the burden would fall on the ability of the sponsoring agency to recruit and/or select individuals who already possess remote viewing skills.

**Other Boundary Conditions.** In the preceding discussion, we have limited commentary to those boundary conditions directly addressed in the literature. However, a number of other boundary conditions exist that might limit potential applications of the remote viewing phenomenon. One such limitation on potential applications of the phenomenon involves the assessments of the information provided by the remote viewers. Typically, when judgmental data, such as target matches, are to be used in decision making, evidence is required indicating that end-user analysts arrive at much the same decisions. If analysts (or trained judges) cannot arrive at similar decisions, it is impossible to know what kind of actions should be taken. Unfortunately, evidence is not available indicating the degree of interrater, or cross-judge, agreement. Accordingly, it is difficult to assess whether different analysts or judges will reach similar conclusions given the same data. These differences in assessments, if indeed they exist, may set another important limitation on potential applications of remote viewings.

Another boundary condition that has potential importance for remote viewing operational applications pertains to the degree of prior practice. In the remote viewing research studies conducted as part of the present program, both judges and the viewers have had years working together on a rather limited target set. Putting aside for the moment potential cueing and rule-based learning effects resulting from long periods of practice, in most field settings viewers and judges or analysts will have only limited opportunities to work together. As a result, it is open to question whether the findings obtained in these laboratory experiments can be extended to field settings.

## Boundary Conditions: Conclusions

The issue of boundary conditions is part of a broader problem in generalizing research findings to operational settings. Typically, generalization from laboratory to operational settings is contingent on three requirements (Cook & Campbell, 1979). First, there is a need to demonstrate that an observed effect is sufficiently robust that it can be observed using different methods. Second, explicit verified causal explanations, reflecting an understanding of the source of

observed effects, need to be provided. Third, alternative causal explanations, for example judges and viewers learning implicit rules, must be ruled out. The laboratory experiments in the current research program conducted to date have relied on one method, judgmental matching; plausible causal mechanisms has not been identified; and studies have not been conducted drawing out competing explanations. Lacking this evidence, drawing strong conclusions concerning the potential operational applications of remote viewing is at best tenuous, and at worst misleading.

Taken as a whole, prior laboratory experiments examining the boundary conditions related to remote viewing have clearly provided an important foundation for establishing the nature of the phenomenon. On the other hand, however, the findings obtained in these studies actually argue ***against*** operational applications in the intelligence community. Broadly speaking, it appears that the conditions under which intelligence information is gathered, the nature of the targets, the unavailability of feedback, and the inconsistency with which accurate viewings are obtained may all limit the usefulness of the phenomenon in intelligence operations. Further, many significant boundary conditions have not been examined and the scientific basis for generalizing from laboratory to field settings has not been provided. Given these observations, it appears that the existing research does not justify operational applications and, in fact, vis a vis the known boundary conditions, argues against operational applications.

## Interview Findings

The second component of the operational evaluation was the interviews conducted with the various parties who had direct involvement in the remote viewing program in various intelligence operations. A detailed description of the procedures used in interviewing program participants and the results obtained in individual interviews is presented in Appendix C; here, we briefly summarize the interview procedures before turning to the principal findings which they generated.

Structured interviews were conducted with the three principal types of program participants: recent users of the remote viewing service, the remote viewers themselves, and the Program Manager. Separate interview protocols were developed for each type of respondent to capture their unique perspectives. The interview questions were written to obtain objective

information about characteristics of the program as opposed to more subjective evaluative assessments of parapsychological phenomena. All questions were reviewed by AIR psychologists.

**Interview Results: End Users.** The interviews conducted with representatives of end user groups were particularly noteworthy: these interviews directly examined the accuracy and utility of the information being provided by the remote viewers and provided user assessments of the operational value of the viewings.

As can be seen in the individual interview reports (Appendix C), initial interest in the potential uses of remote viewing was linked to contact with the Program Manager. Typically, users decided to try out the viewings on an exploratory basis. The primary reasons users were willing to explore the potential value of this technique were that it might (a) provide information otherwise difficult or impossible to obtain, and (b) provide information more rapidly and economically than other sources. All of the users indicated that viewings might be especially attractive when other, more traditional options had been exhausted.

The tasks assigned to viewers involved a number of different types of targets. Although all of these targets were relevant to operational intelligence issues, the targets were not the same as those reported in the laboratory experiments. The targets included people, their backgrounds, and their actions, as well as their locations. Likewise, the typical tasks asked of the remote viewers were dissimilar to laboratory conditions: they were asked to identify objects at specified locations and where certain objects might be found. When responding to these task demands, the remote viewers typically had at least some background knowledge; in some cases, this background knowledge was substantial. Typically, three independent viewings were obtained. The results of each viewing were summarized in a three or four page report which included drawings and verbal descriptions.

With regard to the information provided in each report, five general observations emerged across all interviews:

- The information provided in the reports was stated in broad, vague terms.

- The reports were most likely to prove accurate with regard to general stereotypical characteristics of the situation. Such results might be attributable to the background information available to the viewers.

- The reports were most likely to prove inaccurate with regard to concrete specifics of the task. For example, the reports often were not consistent with key known facts nor did they provide information about the unique features of a location.

- A large amount of irrelevant and often inaccurate information was contained in the reports, thus making them difficult to apply without substantial interpretive effort.

- The reports independently provided by different remote viewers displayed many inconsistencies.

Because the viewings were not consistent with each other, because inaccuracies were observed, and because the information lacked the specificity needed for intelligence operations, ***the viewings were never used as a primary source of evidence in making decisions.*** In fact, even the most favorable of the user groups found the information inadequate for operational decisions. Instead, it was used to fill in background information on people that could not be readily obtained through available assets. All of the users noted that viewings should only be considered as providing supplemental information, and should be judiciously interpreted if used at all.

The perceived utility of the information varied with the nature of the organization using the viewing services. Typically, viewings were seen as more valuable when the organization involved did not have adequate assets available and when there was no other convenient way of obtaining requisite information. When other information sources were available, the users found the viewings to be less valuable. In all cases, the users remarked that they would continue to consider working with the viewers on an exploratory basis. However, in most cases the users were not willing to invest their own operational funds to obtain viewings. In part this was an issue of cost; in part, however, the users felt that because the remote viewing process was controversial, official acknowledgement of its value was essential for routine use in intelligence gathering. This point was illustrated by the manager of the most favorable user group, who noted

that many of the analysts were critical of the technique and unwilling to apply it unless specifically directed to do so.

**Remote Viewers.** The three remote viewers we interviewed were all working in the intelligence community when they were recruited to be viewers. Although one viewer was subjected to a formal screening process, all were primarily selected on the basis of their interest in parapsychology. The viewers all received formal training as described in Appendix C and continued to extend this initial training through active exploration of various parapsychological techniques. The viewers used a variety of techniques to produce viewings including automatic writing, meditation, and channelling.

With regard to the procedures used in generating viewings, a number of factors were noted that influenced the nature and outcomes of the viewers' efforts. First, the viewers disagreed as to how useful it was to have background information concerning the nature of their tasking. Second, the viewers noted that the usefulness of viewings depended on having sophisticated, knowledgeable users who accepted the technique and were willing to actively work with what was necessarily somewhat ambiguous information. Third, they uniformly agreed that the types of information requested ♁ such as activities of individuals and specific locations of specific people or objects ♁ were not particularly compatible with their remote viewing experiences.

In addition to these observations, the viewers indicated a number of other considerations that might contribute to program outcomes. Some of these considerations, such as balancing work load and the repetitive nature of specific tasks, related to better management. Other considerations, such as management support and the availability of managers familiar with the process, related to the day-to-day management of the program.

From a parapsychological perspective, a potentially disturbing aspect of the interview was that the remote viewers commented that their written reports were occasionally inconsistent with their viewings. They themselves considered it appropriate to make the written reports consistent with known characteristics of the target, even if the report was different from their viewing. Similarly, the remote viewers commented that previous managers also changed viewers' reports to make them more consistent.

**The Program Manager.** Appendix C presents a summary of the interview with the most recent program manager. Although the manager did not have any prior background in parapsychology, he did bring to the program a background in operational intelligence. This background played an important role in allowing the manager to recruit clients. Most clients, however, had been interested in the program in the past ♂ an interest maintained in part because the program provided a rapid turnaround of otherwise difficult-to-obtain information.

The manager noted that none of the user groups had used the viewings as a primary basis for operational decisions. Instead, they were using the service to explore potential applications of the technique or, alternatively, as a source of supplemental information. Roughly half of the groups contacted agreed to participate in the program on an exploratory basis.

During his interview, the manager stated that recruitment of clients was in large measure due to the Congressional mandate. He noted however, that acceptance of the program was limited by the controversy surrounding remote viewing. The research component was seen as potentially helpful in addressing this issue, although it did not contribute much to operational management. The manager felt that the program's long-term results, particularly in foreign assessment, would be enhanced by declassifying the research work and assigning responsibility for it to another government organization such as the Department of Justice or the National Science Foundation. Along similar lines, he suggested that remote viewing services be provided on a contract basis whenever the need for them arose.

## Conclusions

Before turning to the broader conclusions flowing from these interviews, certain limitations inherent in this particular evaluative effort should be mentioned. First, the evaluation was limited to recent operations. Although this factor reduces and focuses the range of information considered, it does not help to ensure the accuracy of the information reported. Indeed, if previous managers or the viewers themselves changed viewer reports, then relying on this body of information could potentially be misleading with respect to the remote viewing phenomenon or to the operational use of remote viewing. Second, it should be recognized that interviews generate qualitative information that does not permit us to draw strong quantitative

conclusions. Third, it is clear that this report necessarily focuses on actual operations and not on operations as they might occur under ideal conditions.

Even bearing these points in mind, we believe that the interviews have a number of significant implications. The most important implication pertains to the nature of the information provided by the remote viewing process and the potential applications of this information in intelligence operations. The information provided by viewings:

- is vague and general in nature
- is not consistent across independent viewings
- lacks specific content consistent with known facts of the case
- includes a large amount of irrelevant, often erroneous, information

Intelligence operations are contingent on the availability of relatively specific information which is reliable, consistent, and potentially verifiable. The lack of specifics apparent in the viewings may well be an intrinsic characteristic of the process ◆ a point noted by the remote viewers. Nonetheless, this vagueness and the limited agreement evident in viewers' reports make it impossible to apply this information in decision making. One potential strategy for addressing this issue would be to seek more specific information in viewings. However, existing laboratory research provides little support for the likely success of this approach. Alternatively, one might explicitly train users to work with this kind of broad, rather vague information in such a way that they would attend to both its strengths and its weaknesses. However, this kind of effort would require a strong commitment from sponsoring organizations and unambiguous, high-level support for the program.

In addition to the problems associated with the reliability and vagueness of the information provided, the viewings typically contain a large amount of irrelevant information and often fail to capture key aspects of the case. These characteristics of the viewings reduce user confidence in the information provided. Further, the nature of this information is such that the burden is effectively placed on the user in sorting out what is and is not relevant. Under these

conditions it is quite possible that the information provided by viewings will lead users down a number of blind alleys, thereby resulting in misallocation of intelligence resources. Alternatively, it may do little more than reinforce existing preconceptions and stereotypes about the targets ◆ a trend evident in the user interviews.

This observation brings us to the accuracy issue. Although the viewings tended not to be accurate with regard to concrete specifics, a characteristic which held true regardless of the type of tasking, the users felt that they were more accurate in describing broad background factors involved in the case. The problem here, of course, is that this outcome may simply reflect the availability of background information and the logical use of relevant analytic cues. This problem was, in fact, noted by the viewers when they indicated that they modified reports to make them consistent with know background factors. This observation suggests that the viewers may not be providing any more information than could be obtained from perceptive analysis working without the aid of remote viewing techniques.

Still another limitation on the operational value of the information being provided pertains to its source. Remote viewing is a controversial phenomenon. Accordingly, routine operational use of the resulting information across multiple units in the intelligence community may well be contingent on a compelling demonstration of the phenomenon and broad acceptance of the resulting findings. Without this acceptance, users will discount the information provided and attempts to force analysts to use this information are likely to cause conflict. If, however, comparable information were provided by the viewings, it could be argued that the program was more cost-effective than conventional techniques.

The fact that the information being provided is too vague and unreliable to permit operational application suggests that the viewing program is of limited value to the intelligence community. This conclusion, however, pertains to the current program. It is, of course, always possible that a substantially restructured and redirected research effort along with a substantial additional investment of resources might yield better results. Given the costs involved, however, and the need for specific, reliable information, any investment along those lines should be contingent on successful demonstration of not only the existence of the phenomenon but also its ability to consistently produce specific accurate information.

Our foregoing observations of the interview results can be summarized as follows:

- The viewing process has not provided information of adequate specificity and reliability for use in intelligence gathering.
- The process is not widely accepted and is not seen as essential to intelligence gathering.
- The process is often used experimentally because the needed information is difficult to obtain.
- Accuracy is limited to broad superficial characteristics of the case and may simply reflect good logical analysis.
- The available research does not directly support operations and new types of research are needed to justify current operational use.

## User Assessments

A third source of evidence used to evaluate operational utility consisted of analyses of user feedback. This feedback was in the form of assessments of product (i.e., the remote viewers' reports) accuracy and value collected from end users. This information was collected by a representative of the U.S. Government in the Spring and Summer of 1995. The results of these analyses have been compiled in a report; this report is included as Appendix D; we summarize the findings and implications below.

The program office asked each user submitting tasks to evaluate the accuracy and value of the viewings. Evaluations were available for forty viewings obtained in 1994 and 1995. Accuracy (i.e., "Is the information accurate?") was rated on a six-point scale with 1 indicating high degrees of accuracy. Value (i.e., "What is the value of the source's information?") was rated on a five-point scale where a 1 indicated major significance, while a 5 indicated no value. It should be noted that separate ratings were obtained for each viewer's report on each tasking requested by an organization.

The average accuracy rating was 3.0 across viewers and tasks, indicating that there might "possibly" be some accurate information provided. The average value rating was 3.5 (out of 5) indicating that the information was of relatively low value. This pattern of results is consistent with the interview findings. Remote viewings were better at capturing broad background information rather than the concrete, specific information needed for intelligence operations.

Bearing this general conclusion in mind, a number of other questions about the remote viewings can be addressed by these data. For example, one important question is whether any particular remote viewer did particularly well. The accuracy scores of all three viewers were within a tenth of a standard deviation from the mean, while value scores were within a quarter of a standard deviation. Thus, it appears that no one viewer performed exceptionally well or poorly.

Another question is whether the remote viewers performed better on some tasks than others. Because tasks differed by the nature of the organization, this question can be addressed by contrasting the evaluations obtained from different organizations. Two organizations, one concerned with tracking people and one concerned with combat intelligence, indicated that the information provided was of substantially greater accuracy and value than was reported by the other user organizations. In the case of the two organizations providing positive evaluations, however, the viewers had substantial general background information concerning the targets, a finding suggesting that the ratings of outcomes of viewings may be dependent on the amount of pre-existing background information.

These findings are noteworthy because they confirm a conclusion derived from the interviews. More specifically, viewings apparently were of limited accuracy, with accuracy being linked to the availability of general background information. Such background information, however, was not believed to have much operational value.

## Information Gathering Applications: Operational Conclusions

The findings obtained in this evaluation of the intelligence applications of remote viewing lead us to the conclusion that ***remote viewing*** as used in the present program has limited value for

# Chapter Two: Evaluation Plan

The broad goal of the present effort was to provide a thorough and objective evaluation of the remote viewing program. Because of the multiple components of the program, a multifaceted evaluation plan was devised. As mentioned previously, only the research and intelligence gathering components of the program were considered here. In this chapter, we describe the general approach used in evaluating these two components of the program, beginning with the research program.

## Remote Viewing Research

**The Research Program.** The government-sponsored research program had three broad objectives. The first and primary objective was to provide scientifically compelling evidence for the existence of the remote viewing phenomenon. It could be argued that if unambiguous evidence for the existence of the phenomenon cannot be provided, then there is little reason to be concerned with its potential applications.

The second objective of the research program was to identify causal mechanisms that might account for or explain the observed (or inferred) phenomenon. This objective of the program is of some importance; an understanding of the origins of a phenomenon provides a basis for developing potential applications. Further, it provides more compelling evidence for the existence of the phenomenon (Cook & Campbell, 1979; James, Muliak, & Brett, 1982). Thus, in conducting a thorough review, an attempt must be made to assess the success of the program in developing an adequate explanation of the phenomenon.

the intelligence community as an information gathering technique. The basic considerations that lead us to this conclusion are:

- Conditions under which significant effects are observed in experimental laboratory research are, for the most part, unlikely to occur in intelligence operations. Not only will feedback be unavailable, but the target pool will typically be unconstrained.

- Information provided by the remote viewing technique tends to be vague and ambiguous and it appears difficult, if not impossible, to consistently obtain accurate information from the remote viewers across a range of targets.

These problems with the consistency and accuracy of viewings were also apparent in the end user interviews. In these interviews, viewings were found to be too broad and vague; the viewings failed to provide the concrete, specific information needed for actionable intelligence. Further, there were indications that its potential usefulness was limited to information which could be acquired in other ways.

Thus, the evidence accrued from research, interviews, and user assessments all indicate that the remote viewing phenomenon has no real value for intelligence operations at present. In fact, given the findings obtained to date and the nature of intelligence operations, one must question whether any further applications can be justified without major theoretical and practical advances in our understanding of the phenomenon, assuming it exists at all.

# Chapter Five: Conclusions

In the preceding chapters of this report, we have presented a variety of evaluative data bearing on the existence of the paranormal phenomenon known as remote viewing and its potential applications in intelligence gathering. This multifaceted evaluation effort was structured to ensure a fair, unbiased evaluation of both the research program and its intelligence applications. As is the case with any objective, relatively sophisticated program evaluation effort, many pieces of evidence bearing on different aspects of the program have been presented. In this chapter, we summarize the basic conclusions flowing from this evaluation effort.

## Summary of Key Findings

Two expert reviewers, one known to be a sophisticated advocate of the study of paranormal phenomena and one viewed as a fair-minded skeptic, reviewed the laboratory experiments conducted as part of the current program that bear on the existence of the remote viewing phenomenon. They focused primarily on recent, better-controlled laboratory studies, drawing from other sources as needed to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the research literature. Although the reviewers disagreed on some points, on many points they reached substantial agreement.

The first important point of agreement concerns the existence of a statistically significant effect, which leads to the following finding:

- A statistically significant effect has been observed in the recent laboratory experiments of remote viewing.

However, the existence of a statistically significant effect did not lead both reviewers to the conclusion that this research program has provided an unequivocal demonstration that remote viewing exists. A statistically significant effect might result either from the existence of the phenomenon, or, alternatively, to methodological artifacts or other alternative explanations for the observed effects.

It is with regard to the explanation for these effects that the two reviewers differ most clearly. One reviewer argues that the procedures used in recent studies rule out many, but not all, methodological explanations. The other reviewer argues that the consistency of the results obtained across experiments strongly suggests the existence of the paranormal phenomenon. We concluded that

- The experimental research conducted as part of the current program does not unambiguously support the interpretation of the results in terms of a paranormal phenomenon.

Both reviewers agreed that one important methodological problem has not yet been addressed. Specifically, only one judge—apparently the Principal Investigator—was used in assessing matches throughout these experimental studies. As a consequence, there is no evidence for agreement across independent judges as to the accuracy of the remote viewings. Failure to provide evidence that independent judges arrive at similar conclusions makes it difficult to unambiguously determine whether the observed effects can be attributed to the remote viewers' (paranormal) ability, to the ability of the judge to interpret ambiguous information, or to the combination or interaction of the viewers and the judge. Furthermore, given the Principal Investigator's familiarity with the viewers, the target set, and the experimental procedures, it is possible that subtle, unintentional factors may have influenced the results obtained in these studies. Thus, until it can be shown that independent judges agree, and similar effects are obtained in studies using independent judges, it cannot be said that adequate evidence has been provided for existence of the remote viewing phenomenon.

Both reviewers agree that no compelling explanation has been provided for the observed effects. One reviewer considers the investigation of the determinants of remote viewing as the next necessary step, but does not see it as essential to continue to conduct experiments designed solely to demonstrate the existence of the phenomenon. The other reviewer argues that without identifying causal mechanisms and explicitly providing evidence that alternative explanations cannot account for the observed effects, we cannot say we have convincing evidence for the existence of a phenomenon. Essentially, this position holds that an observed effect may arise for many reasons; to say a phenomenon has been demonstrated we must know the reasons for its existence.

Our conclusion is that at this juncture it would be premature to assume that we have a convincing demonstration of a paranormal phenomenon. In fact, until a plausible causal mechanism has been identified, and competing explanations carefully investigated, we cannot interpret the set of anomalous observations localized to one laboratory with one set of methods. Given these observations, and the methodological problems noted above, we must conclude that

- Adequate experimental and theoretical evidence for the existence of remote viewing as a parapsychological phenomenon has not been provided by the research component of current program. A significant change in focus and methods would be necessary to justify additional laboratory research within the current program.

This is not to say definitively that paranormal phenomena do not exist. At some point in time, adequate evidence might be provided for the existence of remote viewing. With this point in mind, we considered the potential applications of remote viewing in intelligence gathering.

The first consideration involves the conditions under which remote viewing occurs and if those conditions constrain its application for intelligence purposes. Prior research suggests that distance is not a constraint and indeed that a sender or "beacon" may not be necessary. However, other characteristics of intelligence gathering indicate that remote viewing is of little value. Intelligence operations do not provide targets of a fixed bandwidth; rather, targets and target types are highly variable. Moreover, the apparent necessity for feedback to the remote viewers would preclude its use in intelligence gathering operations. Finally, intelligence information is most valuable if it is concrete and specific, and reliably interpretable. Unfortunately, the research

conducted to date indicates that the remote viewing phenomenon fails to meet those preconditions. Therefore, we conclude that

- Remote viewing, as exemplified by the efforts in the current program, has not been shown to have value in intelligence operations.

This point was also graphically illustrated in the user interviews, where it was found that remote viewings have **never** provided an adequate basis for "actionable" intelligence operations—that is, information sufficiently valuable or compelling enough so that action was taken as a result. If a phenomenon does not contribute to intelligence operations, it is difficult to see what justification exists for its continued application. This is particularly true in the case of remote viewing, where a large amount of irrelevant, erroneous information is provided and little agreement is observed among viewers' reports.

Particularly troublesome from the perspective of the application of paranormal phenomena is the fact that the remote viewers and project managers reported that remote viewing reports were changed to make them consistent with know background cues. While this was appropriate in that situation, it makes it impossible to interpret the role of the paranormal phenomenon independently. Also, it raises some doubts about some well-publicized cases of dramatic hits, which, if taken at face value, could not easily be attributed to background cues. In at least some of these cases, there is reason to suspect, based on both subsequent investigations and the viewers' statement that reports had been "changed" by previous program managers, that substantially more background information was available than one might at first assume. Give these observations, it is difficult to argue that available evidence justifies application of remote viewing in intelligence operations.

In summary, two clear-out conclusion emerge from our examination of the operational component of the current program. First, as stated above, evidence for the operational value of remote viewing is not available, even after a decade of attempts. Second, it is unlikely that remote viewing—as currently understood—even if existence can be unequivocally demonstrated, will prove of any use in intelligence gathering due to the conditions and constraints applying in intelligence operations and the suspected characteristics of the phenomenon. We conclude that:

- Continued support for the operational component of the current program is not justified.

# Appendix A: Reviewer Vitas

# *CURRICULUM VITAE*[3]

## RAY HYMAN

September 1994

**Present position:**

Professor of Psychology
Department of Psychology
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403

**Date and place of birth:**

June 23, 1928
Chelsea, Massachusetts

**Academic degrees:**

1950 A.B., Boston University
Phi Beta Kappa
Honors in Psychology
1952 M.A., The Johns Hopkins University
1953(FEB) PhD., The Johns Hopkins Univ.

**Positions held:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Jul 1953-Jun 1961 | Assistant Professor of Social Psychology, Harvard University |
| Jul 1958-Jun 1961 | Consultant in Behavioral Research, General Electric Company |
| Sep 1961-Aug 1964 | Associate Professor of Psychology, University of Oregon |

[3]This is a very abbreviated and somewhat modified version of my full resume.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sep 1964- | Professor of Psychology, University of Oregon |
| Sep 1967-Aug 1968 | Fulbright-Hays Research Scholar, University of Bologna, Italy |
| Sep 1976-Dec 1976/Jun 1977-Sep 1977/Jun 1978-Sep 1978 | NSF Faculty Fellowship in Science Applied to Societal Problems |
| Sep 1982-Jun 1983 | Visiting Professor of Psychology, Stanford University (Thomas Welton Stanford Chair for Psychical Research) |

**Additional Positions and Experience**[4]

| | |
|---|---|
| Mar 1949-Jul 1949 | Statistician for antihistamine study, Allergy Fund of Boston |
| Jan 1953-Jul 1953 | Consultant to Systems Coordination Division, Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, D.C. |
| Jul 1974-Aug 1974 | Subcommittee on Preparing Problems and Examples for Committee on the Mathematical Training of Social Scientists, Social Science Research Council |
| Oct 1955-Jan 1956/Oct 1956-Jan 1957/Oct 1957-Jan 1958 | Director of Statistical Workshop for Psychology Department, Clark University |
| Oct 1957-Jun 1958 | Statistical Consultant, Age Center of New England |
| 1970-1975 | Statistical Consultant, Roseburg VA Hospital |

[4]A Partial listing.

**Some Current or Recent Positions:**

Executive Council, Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal

Editorial Board, The Skeptical Inquirer

Member of National Research Council's Committee on Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance (1985-1991)

**Publications:**

BOOKS & MONOGRAPHS:

Bush, R.R., Abelson, R.P., & Hyman, R. (1956). Mathematics for psychologists: examples and problems. New York: Social Science Research Council.

Vogt E.Z., & Hyman, R. (1979, Revised Edition). Water Witching U.S.A. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Hyman, R. (1960). Some experiments in creativity. New York: General Electric Company (101 pages).

Hyman, R. (1960). Methods for the study of creativity: an evaluation of current research. New York: General Electric Company (204pp).

Hyman, R. (1964). The nature of psychological inquiry. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Hyman, R. (1965). Creativity and the prepared mind: preconceptions in creative achievement and creativity research. National Art Education Association.

The third objective of the research program was to identify techniques or procedures that might enhance the utility of the information provided by remote viewings. For example, how might more specific information be obtained from viewers and what conditions set boundaries on the accuracy of viewings? Research along those lines is of interest primarily because it provides the background necessary for operational applications of the phenomenon.

The NRC provided a thorough review of the unclassified remote viewing research through 1986. In this review (summarized in Swets & Bjork, 1990), the nature of the research methods led the reviewers to question whether there was indeed any effect that could clearly be attributed to the operation of paranormal phenomena. Since then, the Principal Investigator, Dr. Edwin May, under formerly classified government contracts, has conducted a number of other studies not previously reviewed. These studies were expressly intended to address many of the criticisms raised in the initial NRC report. Because these studies might provide new evidence for the existence of the remote viewing phenomenon, its causal mechanisms, and its boundary conditions, a new review seemed called for.

**The Review Panel.** With these issues in mind, a blue-ribbon review panel was commissioned, with the intent of ensuring a balanced and objective appraisal of the research. Two of the reviewers were scientists noted for their interest, expertise, and experience in parapsychological research. The first of these two expert reviewers, Dr. Jessica Utts, a Professor of Statistics at the University of California-Davis, is a nationally-recognized scholar who has made major contributions to the development and application of new statistical methods and techniques. Among many other positions and awards, Dr. Utts is an Associate Editor of the Journal of the American Statistical Association (Theory and Methods) and the Statistical Editor of the Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research. She has published several articles on the application of statistical methods to parapsychological research and has direct experience with the remote viewing research program.

The second expert reviewer, Dr. Raymond Hyman, is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Oregon. Dr. Hyman has published over 200 articles in professional journals on perception, pattern recognition, creativity, problem solving, and critiques of the paranormal. He served on the original NRC Committee on Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance. Dr. Hyman serves as a resource to the media on topics related to the paranormal,

Hyman, R. (1989). The elusive quarry: a scientific appraisal of psychical research. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

Hyman, R. (in preparation). How smart people go wrong: cognition and human error.

ARTICLES:

I have published over 200 articles in professional journals on perception, pattern recognition, creativity, problem-solving and critiques of the paranormal. I consider all my publications as dealing with aspects of my major interest in human error and deception. I have also published articles in magic journals and have won awards for inventing new conjuring effects.

**Public Talks and Media Presentations**

During this period I have given talks to public schools, civic groups, and other organizations. I also have appeared on several television and radio programs. I serve as a resource to the media on various topics related to the paranormal, deception, mysticism, the occult, and human error. In this connection I have appeared on all the major networks, on Cable Network News, the Larry King Live show, Italian Television, Canadian Television, BBC television, and Nova. I see these appearances as part of my program to help educate the public about how human cognition both enables us to cope with problems and makes us susceptible to illusion and deception.

**My experience and Credentials Relevant to Alleged Psychic Phenomena**

Since 1953, I have been called upon by various governmental agencies to investigate or evaluate paranormal claims. Some examples would be the evaluation of a lady who allegedly could read with her finger tips, the evaluation of the claim by a group of engineers that they could teach psychics to gather information from photographs; the assessment of parapsychological research by American and foreign investigators; and the observation of metal bending and other alleged miracles by Uri Geller. I have also served as consultant and expert witness in court cases involving psychics or related paranormal claims. I have appeared on several radio and television programs in the United States, Great Britain, Canada and Italy to comment upon paranormal

claims and to demonstrate how alleged paranormal phenomena can be duplicated by simple trickery and psychological manipulation.

I earned my way through college performing mentalism and reading palms. I have demonstrated psychic readings on several television and radio shows. I have done research and written articles on why people can falsely believe that their psychic readings were accurate and depended upon occult information. I have been invited to the Euroskeptics' conference in Ostende, Belgium to conduct a workshop on psychic readings at the end of September, 1994.

# *CURRICULUM VITAE*[5]

## JESSICA M. UTTS

Current Employment:

Professor, Division of Statistics
University of California, Davis
Davis, CA 95616

916-752-6496 (office phone)
916-752-7099 (FAX)
jmutts@ucdavis.edu

Education

BA State University of New York at Binghamton, Math and Psychology, 1973
MA Pennsylvania State University, Statistics, 1975
PhD. Pennsylvania State University, Statistics, 1978

Previous Titles and Visiting Positions:

Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Department of Psychology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, Winter 1994.

Director, Statistical Laboratory, University of California, Davis, 7/88-6/93

SRI International, Cognitive Sciences Program, Menlo Park, CA, Visiting Scientist, 6/87-8/88

Stanford University, Dept. of Statistics, Visiting Professor, 6/83-9/83 and 9/84-6/85

[5]This is a very abbreviated and somewhat modified version of my full resume.

University of California, Davis, Division of Statistics, Assistant and Associate Professor, 7/79-6/79

University of California, Davis, Dept. of Mathematics, Assistant Professor, 7/78-6/79

Pennsylvania State University, Dept. of Statistics, Instructor, 3/78-8/78

Academic Honors:

Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1992
Fellow, Institute of Mathematical Statistics, 1991
Fellow, American Statistical Association, 1990
Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award, University of California, Davis, 1984
Magnar Ronning Award for Teaching Excellence, University of California, Davis, 1981
Phi Beta Kappa, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1973

Professional Affiliations and Offices (alphabetical order):

American Association for the Advancement of Science: various roles in Section U (Statistics)
American Statistical Association: President, State College PA Chapter, 1977-78
Biometric Society, Western North American Region: President, 1986; Reg. Comm., 1982-84; Program Chair, 1983
Caucus for Women in Statistics: President, 1988
Institute of Mathematical Statistics: Treasurer, 1988-1994; Assistant Program Secretary, 1980, 1989
Parapsychological Association: Representative to AAAS Section X, 1989-
Phi Beta Kappa: President of UC Davis Chapter, 1984-85, Vice President, 1983-84
Society for Scientific Exploration: Council Member, 1987-93

Major Consultations and Panels:

National Academy of Sciences, Panel on the Evaluation of AIDS Interventions
Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, Panel to Assess Defense Technologies
National Park Service, Statistics Short Course for Resource Management Trainees
California Department of Health Services, Course on Statistics for Groundwater
SRI International Cognitive Sciences Program, Consultant
California Public Utilities Commission, Consultant
Hershey Medical Center, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Study, Consultant
ABC News 20/20 Program, Interview (appeared July 4, 1985); various other national television shows

Editorial Positions:

Associate Editor, *Journal of the American Statistical Association* (Theory & Method)
Statistical Editor, *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*

PUBLICATIONS

1. 1976 Utts, J.M. and T.A. Ryan, Jr. Lack of fit in regression. *American Statistical Association Proceedings of the Statistical Computing Section,* 285-287

2. 1976 Varner, L. and J. Utts. Parallel prediction lines: A test for interaction. *The Journal of Educational Research,* 70(2):63-66

3. 1977 Hettmansperger, T.P. and J.M. Utts. Robustness properties for a simple class of rank estimates. *Communication in Statistics - Theory and Methods,* A6(9): 855-868

4. 1977 Naeye, R.L., W.L. Harkness and J. Utts. Abruptio placentae andperinatal death: a prospective study. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology,* 128(7): 740-746

5. 1980 Utts, J.M. and T.P. Hettmansperger. A robust class of tests and estimates for multivariate location. *Journal of the American Statistical Association,* 75(372): 939-946

6. 1981 Ainley, D.G., C.R. Grau, T.E. Roudybush, S.H. Morrell and J.M.Utts. Petroleum ingestion reduces reproduction in Cassin's auklets. *Marine Pollution Bulletin,* 12(9): 314-317.

7. 1982 Utts, J.M. The rainbow test for lack of fit in regression. *Communications in Statistics-Theory and Methods,* 11(24): 2801-2815

8. 1983 Samaniego, F.J. and J.M. Utts. Evaluating performance incontinuous experiments with feedback to subjects. *Psychometrika*, 48(2): 195-209

9. 1985 Rucker, M.K. McGee, M. Hopkins, A. Harrison and J. Utts. Effects of similarity and consistency of style of dress on impression formation. In *The Psychology of Fashion*, ED. M.R. Solomon, Lexington Books, Lexington, MASS, 309-318

10. 1985 May, E.C., D.I. Radin, G.S. Hubbard, B.S. Humphrey and J.M. Utts. Psi experiments with random number generators: an informational model. *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association Annual Convention,* 235-266

11. 1985 Johnson, W.O., J.M. Utts, and L.M. Pearson. Bayesian robust estimation of the mean. *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series C (Applied Statistics),* 35(1):63-72

12. 1986 Utts, J.M. The Ganzfel Debate: a statistician's perspective. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 50: 393-402

13. 1986 Utts, J.M. Comment on "Computers in statistical research." *Statistical Science,* 1(4): 437-439

14. 1986 Johnson, W.O., L.M. Pearson, and J.M. Utts. A Monte Carlo comparison of Bayesian estimators and trimmed means. *Journal of Statistical Computation and Simulation,* 25:167-192

15. 1986 Utts, J.M. and E.C. May. An exact method for combining P-values. *Research in Parapsychology,* 99-103, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J.

16. 1987 G.P. Hansen and J. Utts. Use of both sum of ranks and direct hits in free-response psi experiments. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 51:321-335

17. 1987 Utts, J. Psi, statistics, and society. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences,* 10:615-616

18. 1988 Utts, J. Successful replication versus statistical significance. *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association,* 31:148-162

19. 1988 Humphrey, B.S., E.C. May and J. Utts. Fuzzy set technology in the analysis of remote viewing, *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association,* 31:378-394

20. 1988 Palmer, J.A., C. Honorton and J. Utts. Reply to the National Research Council study on parapsychology, *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research,* 83(1):31-49. (Also published in *Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association*, 31:424-451

21. 1988 Utts, J. Successful replication versus statistical significance. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 52(4):305-320

22. 1989 Radin, D. and J. Utts. Experiments investigating the influence of intention on random and pseudorandom events. *Journal of Scientific Exploration,* 3(1):65-79

23. 1989 Flay, B.R., R.C. Kessler, and J.M. Utts. Evaluating media campaigns. In *Evaluating AIDS Prevention Programs,* Coyle, Boruch, and Turner, Eds., National Academy Press, Washington, DC

24. 1989 Utts, J. Randomness and randomization tests: A reply to Gilmore. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 53(4):345-35

25. 1990 Utts, J. Use hammers for nails and corkscrews for wine: In defense of defendable statistical methods. *The Skeptic,* 4(5): Sept./Oct. 1990, 16-18

26. 1990 May, E.C., J.M. Utts, B.S. Humphrey, W. Luke, T.J. Frivold, and V.V. Trask. Advances in Remote Viewing, *Journal of Parapsychology,* 54(3), 193-228

27. 1991 Utts, J.M. Replication and meta-analysis in parapsychology (with discussion). *Statistical Science,* 6(4), 363-403

28. 1992 Christensen, R. and J.M. Utts Testing for nonadditivity in log-linear and logitmodels. *Journal of Statistical Planning and Inference,* 33, 333-343

29. 1992 Christensen, R. and J.M. Utts. Bayesian resolution of the exchange paradox. *The American Statistician,* November 1992, 274-276

30. 1992 Hansen G.P., J.M. Utts and B. Markwick. Critique of the PEAR remote viewing experiments. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 56(2), 97-113

31. 1993 Utts, J. Analyzing free-response data-a progress report. In *PSI Research Methodology-A Reexamination,* ed. L. Coly and J.D.S. McMahon, Parapsychology Foundation, New York, 71-83

32. 1993 Utts, J. Honorton the Meta-Analyst. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 57(1), 89-100

33. 1993 Utts, J. Obituary: Florence Nightengale David, 1909-1993. *Biometrics,* 49, 1289-1291

34. 1993 Krippner, S., W. Braud, I.L. Child, J. Palmer, K.R. Rao, M. Schlitz, R.A. White and J.M. Utts. Demonstration research and meta-analysis in parapsychology. *Journal of Parapsychology,* 57(3), 275-286

35. 1994 Utts, J. Social, Institutional, and Cultural Influences of Gender on Science. In *Women and Parapsychology,* ed. L. Coly and R.A. White, Parapsychology Foundation, New York, 28-44

36. 1994 Murphy, T.M. and J.M. Utts. A retrospective analysis of peer review at Physiologia Plantarum. *Physiologia Plantarum,* 92, 535-542

BOOKS

1. 1996 Utts, Jessica *Seeing Through Statistics,* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION

1. 1975 Utts, J.M. A test for lack of fit in regression models. Technical Report No. 29, Department of Statistics, The Pennsylvania State University.

2. 1979 Utts, J.M. and T.P. Hettmansperger. A robust class of tests and estimates for multivariate location. Technical Report No. 1, Division of Statistics, University of California, Davis. (see Publ. #5A.)

3. 1980 Utts, J.M. and L.L. Varner. A procedure for analyzing a large data set using log-linear models. Technical Report No. 14, University of California, Davis.

4. 1982 Samaniego, F.J. and Utts, J.M. Evaluating performance in continuous experiments with feedback to subjects. Technical Report No. 30, University of California, Davis. (See Publ. #8)

5. 1982 Utts, J.M. A Regional test for fit in regression. Technical Report No. 38, University of California, Davis.

6. 1982 Johnson, W.O., L.M. Pearson and J.M. Utts. Assessing the performance of some robust point and interval estimators in the presence of mean-shift contamination. Technical Report No. 44, Division of Statistics, University of California, Davis.

7. 1983 Utts, J.M. A sensible approach to hypothesis testing. Technical Report No. 51, University of California, Davis.

8. 1985 Utts, J.M. Inference for an experiment based on repeated majority vote. Technical Report, Dept. of Statistics, Stanford University

9. 1987 Utts, J.M., E.C. May and T.J. Frivold. Intuitive data sorting. Technical Report, SRI International Cognitive Sciences Program, Menlo Park, CA, December 1987.

10. 1987 Hubbard, G.S., J.M. Utts and W.W. Braud. Experimental protocol for hemolysis: Confirmation experiment. Technical Report, SRI International Cognitive Sciences Program, Menlo Park, CA, December 1987.

and has testified as an expert witness in court cases involving paranormal claims. He is recognized as one of the most important and fair-minded skeptics working in this area. Curriculum Vitae for Dr. Utts and Dr. Hyman are included in Appendix A.

In addition to these two experts, four other scientists were involved in the work of the review panel. Two senior behavioral scientists and experts in research methods at the American Institutes for Research, Dr. Michael Mumford and Dr. Andrew Rose, served both as members of and staff to the panel. Dr. Mumford holds a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Georgia. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association's Division 5, Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics. Dr. Rose is a cognitive psychologist with a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He has over 22 years of experience in designing and conducting basic and applied behavioral science research. Dr. Rose is Chief Scientist of the Washington Office of AIR. They were to bring to the panel a methodological perspective unbiased by prior work in the area of parapsychology. The third participant was Dr. Lincoln Moses, an Emeritus Professor of Statistics at Stanford University, who participated in the review as a resource with regard to various statistical issues. Finally, Dr. David A. Goslin, President of AIR, participated as both a reviewer and coordinator for the review panel.

**Research Content.** Prior to convening the first meeting of the review panel, the CIA transferred to AIR all reports and documents relevant to the review. We organized and copied these documents. In addition, the Principal Investigator for the program, Dr. Edwin May, was asked to provide two other pieces of information for the panel. First, he was asked to list those studies which he believes provide the strongest evidence bearing on the nature and significance of the remote viewing phenomenon. Second, he was asked to identify all unique studies conducted since the initial NRC report that provide evidence bearing on the nature and significance of the phenomenon. Additionally, he was asked to participate in an interview with members of the review panel following its first meeting to clarify any ambiguities about these studies. The complete list of documents, including notations of the "strongest evidence" set and the "unique" set, is included in Appendix B.[2]

[2]One document pertaining to the program remained classified during the period of this review. One of the review panel (Dr. Mumford) examined this document and provided an unclassified synopsis to the review panel.

11. 1987 Humphrey, B.S., E.C. May, J.M. Utts, T.J. Frivold, W.W. Luke, and V.V. Trask. Fuzzy set applications in remote viewing analysis. Technical Report, SRI International Cognitive Sciences Program, Menlo Park, CA, December 1987.

12. 1991 Christensen, R. and J. Utts. Bayesian resolution of classical paradoxes: two examples. Technical Report #220, Division of Statistics, University of California, Davis.

BOOK REVIEWS

1. 1987 Utts, J.M. Nonparametric Methods for Quantitative Analysis (2nd ed.) by Jean Dickinson Gibbons. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 82(397):364-367

2. 1988 Utts, J.M. Dictionary and Classified Bibliography of Statistical Distributions in Scientific Work, Vol. 1: Discrete Models, by G.P. Patil, M.T. Boswell and M.V. Ratnaparkhi; Vol. 2: Continuous Univariate Models, by G.P. Ratnaparkhi; Vol. 3: Multivariate Models, by G.P. Patil, M.T. Boswell, M.V. Ratnaparkhi, and J.J.J. Roux. *Journal of the American Statistical Association,* 83:562

3. 1993 Utts, J. Perspectives on Contemporary Statistics, ed. by D.C. Hoaglin and D.S. Moore. *Journal of the American Statistical Association,* 88, 695.

# Appendix B: Bibliography

DeGraff, E., May, E.C. (1993). Phenomenological Research and Analysis. Periodic Status Report—Covering 12/30/92 - 04/23/93, Contract MDA908-93-C-0004, SAIC, Menlo Park, CA.

DeGraff, E., May E.C. (1993). Phenomenological Research and Analysis. Periodic Status Report—Covering 4/23/93 - 6/30/93, Contract MDA908-93-C-0004, SAIC, Menlo Park, CA.

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**Review Procedures.** Remote viewing, like virtually all other parapsychological phenomena, represents one of the most controversial research areas in the social sciences (e.g., Bem & Honorton, 1994; Hyman, 1994). Therefore, any adequate review of the research program must take this controversy into account in such a way that the review procedures are likely to result in a fair and unbiased assessment of the research.

To ensure a fair and comprehensive review, Drs. Utts and Hyman agreed to examine all program documents. In the course of this review it was agreed that all members of the review panel would carefully consider:

- those studies recommended by the Principal Investigator as providing compelling evidence for the phenomenon, and

- those empirical studies conducted since the NRC review that might provide new evidence about the existence and nature of the phenomenon.

The members of the review panel convened at the Palo Alto office of AIR to structure exactly how the review process would be carried out. To ensure that different perspectives on paranormal phenomena would be adequately represented, Drs. Utts and Hyman were asked to prepare independent reports based on their review. In this review, they were to cover four general topics:

- Was there a statistically significant effect?

- Could the observed effect, if any, be attributed to a paranormal phenomenon?

- What mechanisms, if any, might plausibly be used to account for any significant effects and what boundary conditions influence these effects?

- What would the findings obtained in these studies indicate about the characteristics and potential applications of information obtained through the remote viewing process?

# Appendix C: Interviewer Materials

## Interviewer Instructions

In this interview, you will be attempting to gather information bearing on the use of remote viewing in the intelligence community.

Attached you will find the questions to be asked in the interview You should begin the interview by noting that all information, particularly the respondent's identity, will be treated as confidential.

You should begin the interview by stating your name, clearance, and affiliation. After ensuring confidentiality, you should provide a brief description of the reasons for conducting these interviews, describing the origins of the work, including program transfer and the ensuing congressional mandate. You should also note the program evaluation is being conducted by the CIA in conjunction with a not-for-profit research organization.

Once you have provided this background information, you may proceed to the interview questions. Twelve general questions are presented. Please try to work through each of these questions in turn. The early questions focus on background, the middle questions on process, and the final questions on evaluation. To help you follow this structure—one intended to insure objectivity—it might be useful to ask the person being interviewed to hold any questions until the end of the interview.

Once you ask a question, allow the persons being interviewed to answer the question in their own terms. After they have finished you might want to follow up on their answers. You should only ask follow-up questions when the answer provided initially was not clear.

Please sketch out the answers provided in the space below the question and prompts. Note, you should record only what the interviewee says, not your impressions. If you are unsure about a point, ask the interviewee only after you have finished working through the question and prompts.

It should take you about ninety minutes to complete this interview. All material should be returned to Dr. Michael Mumford at the American Institutes for Research.

## Interview Questions

**Users:**

1. Have you used the support of remote viewers?
2. Had you used remote viewers before?
3. What information did you request from the remote viewer?
4. What information did you receive from the remote viewer?
5. How did you use the remote viewing products?
6. Did the remote viewing product seem to confirm your initial approach?
7. Did you receive any subsequent information that confirmed/disconfirmed the remote viewing information (e.g., other intelligence sources)?
8. Could the remote viewing products be used without information from other sources?
9. Were the remote viewing products accurate?
10. How much relevant information was included in the remote viewing product?
11. Would you use this again and if so, under what circumstances?
12. Would you pay for the services of a remote viewer?

**Viewers:**

1. What led you to become interested in the remote viewing program?
2. How were you selected to become a remote viewer?
3. Were you provided with any training and if so, was it helpful?
4. How much familiarity did you have with the remote viewing research?
5. Was this research helpful in doing your work?

6. What were the major types of taskings you were assigned?

7. How much background information did you have about the nature of the target?

8. Was this background information useful in producing a viewing?

9. How did you typically go about generating viewings?

10. When multiple viewers worked on a tasking how were your viewings similar to or different from each other?

11. What could have been done to improve the accuracy and usefulness of viewings?

12. What were the conditions that led to the best viewings?

13. What were the conditions that led to poor viewings?

14. How could the program be managed differently to improve the accuracy and usefulness of viewings?

15. What actions could be taken to make you a better viewer?

**Manager:**

1. Why were you selected to manage the remote viewing program?

2. How did you identify potential users of the remote viewing services?

3. Why did users request viewings?

4. What were the major types of taskings requested by the users?

5. How many user groups requested multiple viewings?

6. How did you assign viewers to taskings?

7. How much information did the viewers have about the nature or background of the tasking?

8. How useful was the research background in structuring the viewers' activities?

9. What kind of information was typically provided to the viewers about the tasking?

10. How accurate was the information provided by the viewers relative to other sources of information?

11. When were viewers particularly likely to produce useful and accurate products?

12. What influenced users' acceptance of or use of the remote viewings?

13. How often did viewings have a major influence on operational decisions?

14. What organizational influences contributed to the successes of the program?

15. What organizational influences limited the success of the program?

16. How should the program be managed differently in the future?

## Interview Reports

**Star Gate Operational Use Interview #1**
**July 7, 1995**

CONTEXT: The Unit Commander in the organization had not previously used the services of remote viewers. A single tasking was his only experience in using remote viewing information. The decision to use remote viewers was, in part, based on contact with the Star Gate Program Director and awareness of publicized incidents where remote viewings were used in police cases. The primary motivation for use of the remote viewers appears simply to have been to try out a low-cost approach that might pay off.

TARGET: The target in this case was a person rather than a site. The target person was suspected of potential involvement in espionage. The primary evidence bearing on this assessment was access, finances, and reported comments, of which the most important evidence was financial data.

REQUEST: The remote reviews were asked to provide a variety of information about the target person. The requested information included descriptions of the person, likely travel locations, and events occurring during travel. Four sequential, apparently "independent," remote viewings were obtained.

NATURE OF INFORMATION: The four sequential viewings were provided and accompanied by reports. The information provided in these reports included both verbal descriptions and drawings. A high degree of agreement was not observed among the four remote viewing reports. Furthermore, the narrative descriptive information was provided in broad, highly ambiguous terms.

USE OF INFORMATION: The information provided by these viewings was not held to be useful in any operational sense. The reasons stated for reaching this conclusion were: 1) the information was too broad and too vague to direct relevant observations: 2) crucial elements of the case, particularly financial concerns, did not appear in any of the reports; 3) the information provided could be interpreted in too many different ways; 4) hits were often stereotypic given the available cues in the tasking; 5) there were a large number of demonstrably wrong conclusions.

Given the preceding reactions of the user, no attempt was made to use the information provided by the remote viewers. It did not in any way contribute to the actions taken in the case of interpretation of other available data. It is of note that the data apparently were used objectively without forcing them into preconceptions about the case.

MERITS RELATED TO OTHER SOURCES: It was noted that the users relied more on other sources of information (e.g., financial, human, etc.) than the reports of the remote viewers. The viewings were apparently discredited due to the number of inaccuracies and failure to identify known key aspects of the case.

UTILITY: The remote viewings were not held to be of substantial value due to the inaccurate described above. The user noted however, that further consideration to use of remote viewers would be given if the "situation were desperate, no costs were entailed to the user, and the viewers were more intimately involved in the case for some period of time." It was further noted that remote viewers could be viewed as another source of manpower. In the case at hand, however, the viewings proved of no practical value.

**Star Gate Operational Use Interview #2**
**July 26, 1995**

CONTEXT: The manager of this group has used the services of remote viewers a number of times. In the course of this interview, the unit manager stressed the importance of keeping an open mind. However, the primary motivation for using remote viewing was that it provided a way to obtain, in simple, clear terms, information that could not be easily obtained from other sources, particularly human intelligence, archival records, or financial records. This manager required analysis to provide targets on a regular basis.

TARGET: Three major types of targets were involved. One set of targets consisted of people and their roles in criminal organizations. The second set of targets were ships or the location of material on ships. The third and final type of target was the site of manufacturing operations or shipping. Targets were selected by analysis based on current concerns and generally were described in terms of names and locations.

REQUESTS: The type of information remote viewers were asked to provide was consistent with the nature of the targets. When the target was a person, the viewers were given a name and asked to indicate the person's role and position in a criminal organization. When the target was a ship, they might be asked to indicate its location or type of cargo. When the target was a plant, they might be asked to indicate what was being produced.

NATURE OF INFORMATION: Multiple viewings were made of each target. The results of these viewings were provided in reports presenting both verbal descriptions and drawings. The report material was typically stated in rather broad terms and was synthesized by the analysts. The viewers had some knowledge of the target organizations and their operations but not the background of the particular tasking at hand.

USE OF INFORMATION: The manager indicated that the information provided by the viewers was useful for filling in background information about a person and his or her likely role in a criminal organization (e.g., who is Mr. Chin?). The information provided by the viewers was not deemed useful when they were required to address specific operational issues such as the location of objects on a ship. As a result, the information was not used to guide operations. Instead, it was used to identify the roles of individuals within targeted criminal organizations.

Generally, this background information was felt to be accurate, although it did not permit immediate action. However, the manager being interviewed offered that some degree of accuracy could be expected if the viewers had a knowledge of the sponsoring organization and its areas of interest. The manager also noted that some analysts felt far more comfortable than others about using this type of information, implying that some analysts had to be persuaded to use the information.

MERITS RELATED TO OTHER SOURCES: The nature of the sponsoring organization was such that relatively few alternative sources of information were available. Much of the intelligence information used was indirect, such as shipping patterns or records of business ownership. In comparison to this type of indirect information, the remote viewings were viewed as useful, particularly in identifying backgrounds and roles of people in criminal organizations when direct information was not available.

UTILITY: Although the viewings were deemed useful for filling in background information, they were not deemed useful for operations. It was also pointed out that analysts' doubts about the value of the source might limit use of the resulting information. Further, it was noted that a viable program could only be maintained if it were an in-house government activity. If this provision was met, the manager was willing to devote operational resources to pay for the services of remote viewers.

**Star Gate Operational Use Interview #3**
**August 3, 1995**

CONTEXT: This interview consisted of a group manager and three analysts responsible for identifying lost or missing Department of Defense personnel. The group was interested in remote viewing as another possible tool for identifying the location of lost or missing personnel when more conventional methods (e.g., radios) could not be used. The remote viewings had not been used operationally. Instead, the group was using the services of the remote viewers in a series of experiments to determine whether it had any potential operational value. They had found out about the potential applications of remote viewing through research reports acquired by a fellow

manager. These experiments were conducted with the cooperation of the remote viewing program manager. Both viewers and the program manager had met with members of this operational group of a number of times.
TARGET: In these experiments, two major types of targets were involved: 1) the location of a person at a predetermined time, and 2) the nature of the location or its physical characteristics. Targets were selected on the basis of convenience, typically in proximity to the office, although more distant locations were sometimes selected. In the last experiment, the viewers were asked to indicate the map coordinates of a person who had moved to an area around the office site.

REQUEST: The viewers were asked to indicate the location of the person serving as beacon and describe the location. The person playing the role of beacon evaluated accuracy.

NATURE OF INFORMATION: Three viewers provided independent viewings at the designated time. The material was presented in a three- to four-page report which included drawings and a verbal description of the location. Information contained in the reports often included a number of vague general statements (e.g., "There is water nearby"). The nature of the information was sufficiently broad and vague that the analysts typically had to force an interpretation. These interpretations often involved actions and locations occurring at another time in the day. It was only with this extended interpretation that hits were identified by the analysts.

In the experiment where a specific map location was identified by the viewers, none of the viewers correctly identified the target site. In fact, most of the locations were not in the vicinity of the target site which was a park near the group's office. However, one viewer located the beacon at another nearby park and did describe general characteristics of the park, including trash cans, wooden steps, etc.

USE OF INFORMATION: As noted above, these experiments were not intended to provide information for operational use. However, all members of the group stated that the information was too vague and ambiguous for operations, noting that unless specific map locations could be identified, the information could not be used in operational decision making.

MERITS RELATED TO OTHER SOURCES: Because viewings were being used on an experimental basis, it was not possible to obtain direct comparisons of the viewings with other potential sources of information. However, all members of the group took the position that the information provided was so vague that it could not be used without other sources of information. If used at all, it would be treated as supplemental information that could not by itself provide a basis for operational decisions.

UTILITY: Because the viewers could not identify specific locations in unambiguous terms, the group did not feel the procedures had any current operational utility. They did note, however, that if further research were to yield more specific consistent information from viewers, it might eventually have some utility. Even under these conditions, however, the information would have

to be obtained under the auspices of a formal government program to ensure that it was viewed as credible.

**Star Gate Viewers Interview**
**August 4, 1995**

CONTEXT: This interview was conducted with the three viewers employed in the Star Gate program at the time of its suspension. All three of the viewers attended the group interview. The viewers had worked in the program for at least five years. Generally, all viewers had in one way or another been affiliated with the sponsoring organization prior to becoming viewers. They were recruited by more senior officials based on background factors indicating an interest in parapsychology or psychology more generally.

SELECTION AND TRAINING: Systematic selection procedures or pretesting were not used in selecting two of the three viewers. The third viewer, however, was selected based on a series of tests given by a contractor organization. This viewer reported scoring relatively high in a relatively large pool of candidates.

When viewers entered the program they were provided with formal training. The training included three component stages moving from simple to complex targets. They began with beacon-based viewing on site and progressed to operational targets. This initial training was six to 18 months long. Follow-up or refresher training did not occur. However, all of these viewers had initiated and maintained a personal self-development program which included attempts to keep up with the literature in parapsychology in general and remote viewing in particular.

With regard to the remote viewing research, the viewers noted that the research paradigm did not directly correspond to operational assignments in terms of conditions and requirements (e.g., the availability of a beacon). Thus, a variety of different sources and techniques was used in self development and operational assignments aside from those found in the remote viewing research literature.

TECHNIQUES: Each of the three viewers used different techniques to generate viewings. One viewer used coordinate viewing coupled with meditation. The second viewer relied on relaxation techniques and meditation. The third viewer relied on channelling and automatic writing.

Although the viewers tended to rely on different techniques, they noted that these techniques were not necessarily incompatible. Further, it was pointed out that all of these techniques were physically and emotionally draining and resulted in products which were somewhat ambiguous or vague in nature. As a result, the ability of users to correctly interpret the results of a viewing was

After they had each completed their reports, they presented the reports to other members of the panel. After studying these reports, all members of the review panel (except Dr. Moses) participated in a series of conference calls. The primary purpose of these exchanges was to identify the conclusions on which the experts agreed and disagreed. Next, in areas where they disagreed, Drs. Utts and Hyman were asked to discuss the nature of the disagreements, determine why they disagreed, and if possible, attempt to resolve the disagreements. Both the initial reports and the dialogue associated with discussion of any disagreements were made a part of the written record. In fact, Dr. Hyman's opinions on areas of agreement and disagreement are included in his report; in addition to her initial report, Dr. Utts prepared a reply to Dr. Hyman's opinions of agreement and disagreement. This reply, in addition to their original reports, are included in Chapter 3 below.

If disagreements could not be resolved through this dialogue, then the other members of the review panel were to consider the remaining issues from a general methodological perspective. Subsequently, they were to provide an addendum to the dialogue indicating which of the two positions being presented seemed to be on firmer ground both substantively and methodologically. This addendum concludes Chapter 3 below.

## Intelligence Gathering: The Operational Program

**The Program.** In addition to the research component, the program included two operational components. One of those components was "foreign assessment," or analysis of the paranormal research being conducted by other countries. This issue, however, is beyond the scope of the present review. The other component involved the use of remote viewing as a technique for gathering intelligence information.

In the early 1970s, the CIA experimented with applications of remote viewing in intelligence gathering. Later in the decade, they abandoned the program. However, other government agencies, including the Department of Defense, used remote viewers to obtain intelligence information. The viewers were tasked with providing answers to questions posed by various intelligence agencies. These operations continued until the Spring of 1995, when the program was suspended.

considered essential to successful application. Generally, the viewers felt that successful use was influenced by acceptance of the phenomenon.

TASKINGS: The viewers were presented with a number of different types of taskings. The targets included people, locations, intentions, and sites. The concerns in initiating taskings included locating people, counter intelligence, locating objects, and identifying the activities at various sites.

With regard to these taskings, viewers differed in the amount of background information they preferred to have before producing viewing. Some viewers preferred substantial background information while others wanted minimal information about the target. The viewers noted, however, that when they had background information it sometimes distorted the process. More specifically, the viewers indicated that they sometimes changed the content of their reports to bring the information presented into line with the known characteristics of the target. They noted that reports tended to be more specific when substantial background information was available. Typically, each viewer generated independent reports for a target. These reports presented both verbal descriptions and drawings. Frequently, different viewers produced rather different reports. This result was attributed in part to the use of different techniques and, in part, to the tendency of viewers to focus on different aspects of the target.

CONDITIONS PROMOTING ACCURACY: The viewers noted a number of conditions that influenced the accuracy and quality of the information contained in their reports. Generally, they felt that the quality of viewing suffered when they were presented with a large number of repetitive taskings over a short period of time. They also noted the quality suffered when the targets lacked intrinsic interest and when external evaluations placed too much pressure on the viewers. The viewers noted that it was particularly difficult to produce accurate viewings for some types of targets. It also was unclear exactly what characteristics of targets influenced accuracy.

The viewers also identified a number of organizational factors that influenced accuracy. First, they felt that knowledgeable, supportive users contributed to accuracy and effective use of the reported information. Second, they felt that more judicious use of background information might contribute to the preparation of more accurate reports, less biased by logical cues. Third, they pointed out that earlier program managers had edited or changed viewers' reports. The viewers felt that this could lead to the loss of potentially significant information.

MANAGEMENT: The viewers noted a number of actions that could be taken to improve the success of the program. To begin with, they indicated that it was important to have a manager who understood the process, the demands it made on people, and the need for a supportive work environment. Along related lines, they indicated that more balanced work-load management, rather than periods of boom and bust, would contribute to program success.

In addition to these issues bearing on management style and management strategy, the viewers made a number of other suggestions. One involved the research program. Here they suggested that research be more focused on the work rather than on narrow technical demonstrations of the existence of the phenomenon. They also suggested that consistent organizational support would play a key role in the long-term success of the program.

**Star Gate Operational Manager Interview**
**August 4, 1995**

CONTEXT: This interview was conducted with the last manager of the remote viewing program. The manager become responsible for this program in 1991 when the previous program manager retired. He was tasked, in accordance with accordance with congressional guidelines, with initiating and managing operational use of the remote viewing service while addressing the two other major program elements: foreign assessment and research and development. The manager's background before accepting this position was in human intelligence. He did not specifically have a background in parapsychology or remote viewing.

CLIENTS: In accordance with his charter, the manager explicitly sought to expand operational use of remote viewing services. He primarily accomplished this through the use of personal contacts and his own background in intelligence. The manager established contact with ten potential user groups. Of these ten groups, two used the service one time while five used the service multiple times. Typically, groups who used the service had at one time or another employed viewers early on in the program's history.

The users or clients typically requested viewings on an experimental basis. More specifically, they were interested in seeing whether there was any potential operational payoff from the program. It was noted that one especially attractive feature of the service was that information could very rapidly be obtained in a concise form.

TASKINGS: In general, users presented four major types of taskings. The viewers were asked to provide information about: 1) people, 2) objects, 3) locations, and 4) intentions. The amount of background information viewers had about the nature of the targets varied. In some cases, particularly when there were multiple sequential taskings, the viewers might have a great deal of information. In most cases, however, the viewers had the name of the sponsoring organization and a one- or two-word description of the target. It is of note that the viewers also differed in the amount of background information requested.

All viewers worked on all taskings although they were allowed to opt out of certain taskings. For each tasking, the viewers produced a three- or four-page report which included pictures and a

verbal description. The accuracy and usefulness of viewings was assessed by customers and this evaluative information was provided as feedback to the viewers by the program manager who instituted this formal evaluation procedure.

In managing the group and responding to the taskings, the manager, although familiar with the research literature, did not explicitly consider the findings obtained in this research. He noted that the research was more useful for general background, establishing the existence of the phenomenon, and foreign assessment, than in managing the viewers' activities.

INFORMATION ACCURACY AND UTILITY: The manager necessarily relied on users to evaluate the accuracy and utility of the viewings provided in response to a specific tasking. He generally recommended that clients use viewings as supplemental information. In the manager's experience, no viewings served as the primary input into an operational decision. Principally, the viewings were used to validate or extend the accuracy of already available information or, alternatively, as a vehicle to stimulate further intelligence gathering. Application of this information depended on the function of the sponsoring organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES: In the manager's view, the original congressional directive along with support of the designated organization were crucial to the successes of the program. However, prior controversy surrounding the program and the existence of the phenomenon set constraints on the success of the program.

With regard to potential improvements in program management, a number of points were mentioned. First, the manager noted that the program should not necessarily reside in the intelligence community. Instead, he recommended that the program be declassified and moved to a more appropriate "open source" sponsor such as the Department of Justice or the National Science Foundation. It was noted that this kind of move would not hurt and, indeed, might help the foreign assessment component of the program. Further, it was suggested that the program involve research and foreign assessment, with viewer services being obtained only as needed on a contractual basis.

# Appendix D: Star Gate Operational Tasking Evaluation

## SUMMARY REPORT
## STAR GATE OPERATIONAL TASKING EVALUATION

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 1986 to the first quarter of FY 1995, the DoD paranormal psychology program received more than 200 tasks from operational military organizations requesting that the program staff apply a paranormal psychological technique know as "remote viewing" (RV) to attain information unavailable from other sources. The operational tasking comprised "targets" identified with as little specificity as possible to avoid "telegraphing" the desired response.

In 1994, the DIA Star Gate program office created a methodology for obtaining numerical evaluations from the operational tasking organizations of the accuracy and value of the products provided by the Star Gate program. By May 1, 1995, the three remote viewers assigned to the program office had responded, i.e., provided RV product, to 40 tasks from five operational organizations. Normally, RV product was provided by at least two viewers for each task.

Ninety-nine accuracy scores and 100 value scores resulted from these product evaluations by the operational users. On a 6-point basis where "1" is the most accurate, accuracy scores cluster around "2's" and "3's" (55 of the entries) with 13 scores of "1". Value scores, on a 5-point basis with "1" the highest, cluster around "3's" and "4's" (80 of the entries); there are no "l's" and 11 scores of "2."

After careful study of the RV products and detailed analysis of the resulting product evaluations for the 40 operational tasks, we conclude that the utility of RV for operational intelligence collection cannot be substantiated. The conclusion results from the fact that the operational utility to the Intelligence Community of the information provided by this paranormal RV process simply cannot be discerned. Furthermore, this conclusion is supported by the results of interviews conducted with representatives of the operational organizations that provided tasking to the program. The ambiguous and subjective nature of the process actually creates a need for additional efforts of questionable operational return on the part of the intelligence analyst. Assuming that the subjective nature of the psychic process cannot be eliminated, one must determine whether the information provided justifies the required resource investment.

## 2.0 GENERIC DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONAL TASKING

Over the period from 1986 to first quarter of FY 1995, the Star Gate program received more than 200 tasks from operational military organizations. These tasks requested that the program staff apply their paranormal psychological technique know as "remote viewing" (RV) in the hope of attaining information unavailable from other sources. The operational tasking comprised "targets" which were "identified" in some manner, normally with as little specificity as possible (see discussion below) to avoid excessively "telegraphing" the desired response. However, until 1994, the results from this tasking were not evaluated by the tasking organizations by any numerical method that would identify the accuracy and value of the provided information (for a few cases in prior years narrative comments were provided by some organizations).

In 1994, this situation changed when the Program Office developed a methodology for obtaining numerical evaluations from the tasking organizations of the Star Gate inputs; this methodology is described briefly in Section 3.0. By May 1, 1995, 40 tasks assigned by five operational organizations had been evaluated under this process.[6] Section 4.0 describes the numerical evaluations performed by evaluators from the tasking organizations. The descriptions presented below regarding the tasking and the related targets refer principally to the operational tasks that were numerically evaluated.

The process for a typical tasking, RV response and subsequent evaluation is as follows:

- The tasking organization provides information to the Star Gate Program Manager (PM) describing the problem to be addressed.

- The PM provides a Tasking Form delineating only the most rudimentary information to one or more of the three Star-Gate RV's[7] for their use during the RV session (a typical Tasking Form is presented in Figure 2-1). In addition, the RV's are appraised of the identity of the tasking organization.

- Subsequently the RV's hold individual "viewing" sessions recording their comments, observations, feelings, etc. and including line drawings or sketches of things, places, or other items "observed" during the session.

- The individual RV inputs are collected and provided to the tasking organization for their review with a request for completing a numerical evaluation of the individual RV inputs for accuracy and for value.

- Finally, for those organization who comply with the request, the evaluation scores are returned to the Star Gate Program Office.

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[6]Evaluation of additional 1994-95 tasks continued after 5/1/95; three tasks since evaluated were reviewed. They caused only insignificant changes to the statistical information provided in Table 4-1 and did not alter any of the Conclusions and Recommendations in Section 7.0.

[7](U) All three RV's were full time government employees.

**FIGURE 2-1**

**TASKING SHEET**

**SOURCE 140:** **079**

**DATE:** **IS Jul 94**

**SUSPENSE:** **18 Jul 94**

**1600 Hrs**

**1. PROJECT NUMBER:** **94-252-0**

**2. METHOD/TECHNIQUE:** **Method of Choice**

**3. BACKGROUND:**

**4. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION:** **Access and describe target.**

**5. COMMENTS:**

Twenty-six (26) of the 40 operational tasks originated from DIA in support of two joint Task Forces, Org. B and Org. C, (see Section 4.0). Typical tasking targets for these organizations comprised the name of a person or thing (e.g., vessel) with a generic request to describe the target, his/her/its activities, location, associations, etc., as appropriate. No specific information (e.g., what is the height/weight/age of the target?) was requested in the tasking. As noted above, the identity of the supported organizations also was provided. For these tasks that identification provides the RV's with knowledge regarding the specific operational interests of these organizations. Thus, any information provided by the RV's which describes or relates to those interests "could be" relevant; and, therefore, could be interpreted by the evaluators as having some level of "accuracy" and "value" depending upon the information described and the evaluator's interests and beliefs.

The tasking provided by the organization denoted as Org. A comprised targets that were "places" visited by "beacons", i.e., an individual from Org. A who visited and "viewed" the site of interest to assist the RV in "visualizing" and describing the site. Targets could be a general vista in or around a particular location, a particular facility at a selected location or, perhaps, a particular item at a location (in the one case where this type of target was used, the item was a particular kind of boat). Usually, no specifics regarding the type of target or its location were provided.

Tasking by Org. D comprised two generic types of targets that related to military interests/concerns current at the time of the tasking, e.g., North Korean (NK) capabilities and leadership. The first type of target focused upon then-current military concerns while the second type required "precognitive" (predictive) capabilities since it required a prognosis of future intentions and actions.[8]

The tasking from Org. E was similar in scope, albeit quite different in context, from the tasks noted earlier for Org. B and Org. C, i.e., describe a person, his activities, location, etc.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the descriptions noted above relate to operational tasks that were numerically scored. During the summer/fall period of 1993, eight operational tasks were levied on the program pertaining to North Korean (NK) tunnels. The target information provided to the RV's typically comprised a map of a large section of NK with a request to identify tunnels within the map area. Evaluation of the results from these tasks was in narrative form only; discussion regarding this narration is presented at the end of Section 3.0.

[8]Some operational tasks from the period Oct. 1990 to Jan 1991 regarding Middle East issues were of a similar type, albeit these were not numerically evaluated. They would provide some data for an after-the-fact check of the accuracy of the RV predictions. ( see Section 7.0 for a discussion of this possibility.)

## 3.0 EVALUATION MEASURES

The numerical evaluation measures that were given to the evaluators of the tasking organizations to score the accuracy and value of the Star Gate inputs were extracted from the Defense Intelligence Agency Manual (DIAM) 58-13. These measures are shown in Table 3-1. Most of the stipulated measures include modifiers such as "may," "possibly," "high," "low," etc. which are subjective and open to individual interpretation by each evaluator. The DIAM 58-13 definitions for the ratings under "Value" are presented in Table 3-2; whether the individual evaluators reviewed these definitions prior to their scoring is unknown. There was no clarification of what was intended by the generic headings of "Accuracy" and "Value", e.g., in the evaluator's estimation how much of the RV's response to the tasking had to qualify for a particular measure —1%, 10%, 90% — to be granted the related score?

Table 3-1 Numerical Evaluation Measures

| Category | Score |
|---|---|
| Accuracy - Is the information accurate? | |
| Yes (true) | 1 |
| May be true | 2 |
| Possible true | 3 |
| No | 4 |
| Possibly not true[9] | 5 |
| Unsure | 6 |
| Value - what is the value of the sources' information? | |
| Major significance | 1 |
| High Value | 2 |
| Of Value | 3 |
| Low Value | 4 |
| No Value | 5 |

As noted in Section 2.0, one series of tasks were evaluated by a narrative discussion only. While much of the final narrative evaluation for this series was complimentary, it lacked any real specifics regarding the usefulness or relevance of the Star Gate inputs and much of the narrative was replete with modifiers and other hedges. A sanitized extract from the final evaluation report

[9]Note that Accuracy scores 5 and 6 actually rank "higher" than 4 since both imply that there may be something accurate in the information. Changing the scoring order to accommodate this observation causes insignificant changes to both the averages and the standard deviations shown on Table 4-1.

for these tasks is presented in Appendix A illustrating the subjective, "uncertain" nature of the comments.

TABLE 3-2 - VALUE RATING DEFINITIONS FROM DIAM 58-13

MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE - Intelligence Information Report (IIR) provided information which will alter or significantly influence national policy, perceptions, or analysis; or provided unique or timely indications and warning of impending significant foreign military or political actions having a national impact.

HIGH VALUE - IIR(s) was best report to date or first report on this important topic, but did not significantly influence policy or change analyses.

OF VALUE - IIR(s) provided information which supplements, updates, confirms, or aids in the interpretation of information in data bases, intelligence production, policy research and analysis, or military operations and plans; most DoD HUMINT System reporting falls into this category.

LOW VALUE - IIR was not a good report because the information was not reported in a timely manner, or was of poor quality/of little substance. Nevertheless, it satisfied some of the consumer's informational needs.

NO VALUE - IIR provided no worthwhile information to support data base maintenance, intelligence production, policy research and analysis, or military operations and planning; or its information had no utility, was erroneous, or misleading.

## 4.0 EVALUATION SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

Thirty-nine (39) of the 40 numerically evaluated, operational tasks were performed in 1994 and one in 1995. The information provided by the Star Gate RV's for each task was evaluated by staff of the tasking organization. The complete compilation of evaluated scores is presented in Table 4-1 which includes a designation of the tasking organization and, where known, a numerical designator for the individual from that organization who signed the response to the evaluation request (in some instances, this was also an evaluator). Also presented are the individual and collective scores for Accuracy (A) and Value (V) for each of the three RV's and the related average and standard deviations for the compiled scores. (Note that the total number of scoring entries for either Accuracy or Value is not equal to the maximum of 120, i.e., 3x40, since all three RV's did not participated in all tasks). Table 4-2 presents the same scoring data by tasking organization.

Histograms of the scores from Table 4-1 are shown below. Note that "Accuracy" scores tend to cluster around 2's and 3's (55 of the 99 entries) while "Value" scores cluster around 3's and 4's (80

of the 1 00 entries). This is not too surprising as the nonspecific, nebulous nature of the individual task target requests permits the RV to "free associate" and permits the evaluator to pick and choose from the RV commentary anything that he thinks "may" or "possibly" is related to his problem (and score accordingly) regardless of how much of the RV commentary may satisfy the particular measure. If the Accuracy of the information is somewhat uncertain, its Value must be vaguer still, i.e., scored lower. This presumption is supported by review of the scored "pairs" for all cases, e.g., 1A and 1V; only rarely does the "V" score equal or exceed the "A" score for a specific RV and target. Note further that of the 100 "V" scores shown on Table 4-1, there are no "1" scores[10], while the 99 "A" scores include 13 "l's". Regarding the latter, a detailed review of the evaluator comments and/or the tasking suggests that the importance of these l's is less than the score would imply in all but four cases since:

- the evaluator of Document 243 stated that the RV 3A score "...though vague, is probably correct."

- the tasking and targets for Documents 245, 247, 248, 249 and 265[11] concern topics widely publicized in the open media during the same. period, hence the "source" of the RV 1A and 3A comments, intended or not, is suspect, and

- for Documents 230, 239 and 244, the evaluator's supporting narrative is inconsistent with the "1" score[12] (and Org. A evaluators score higher — see comments later in this section).

[10]The significance of this omission is further enhanced if one assumes that the evaluators were familiar with the definitions in Table 3-2 since even those 11 instances scored as #2 ("High value") merely require that the input be the "best report to date or first report on this important topic, but [it] did not significantly influence policy or change analyses."

[11](U) The evaluation of Document 265 is actually a second evaluation of the same RV inputs provided many months after the first evaluation of Document 248 and probably done by a different evaluator.

[12] The following were the comments from RV3 regarding Document 244:

"- The site seemed to be crowded. There were people walking down a narrow 'ramp' and they were dressed casually and looked serious. These people were outside and it was warm.

- There were lots of animals at the site. The animals were outside sitting.

- There was one area that was isolated and this area has low rolling green hills with several small structures spread apart sitting on the land."

The evaluators comments regarding this input and for which Accuracy value of 1 was granted were:

"Site is crowded. Prison is full of prisoners moving back and forth between buildings. Casually dressed is true of prison dress and a prisoner does look serious and it was a warm day. One prisoner was feeding a cat outside by the fence. It must be noted that there was not a lot of animals in this area. This area is isolated and does have low rolling green hills with several small structures spread apart sitting in different types of confinement locations thru-out the prison complex."

Although procedures varied somewhat during the history of the program, viewers typically were presented with a request for information about a target of interest to a particular agency. Multiple viewings were then obtained for the target. The results of the viewings then were summarized in a three- or four-page report and sent to the agency that had posed the original question. Starting in 1994, members of the agencies receiving the viewing reports were formally asked to evaluate their accuracy and value.

Any comprehensive evaluation of the remote viewing program must consider how viewings were used by the intelligence community. One might demonstrate the existence of a statistically significant paranormal phenomenon in experiments conducted in the laboratory; however, the phenomenon could prove to be of limited operational value either because it does not occur consistently outside the laboratory setting or because the kind of information provided is of limited value to the intelligence community.

**General Evaluation Procedures.** No one piece of evidence provides unequivocal support for the usefulness of a program. Instead, a more accurate and comprehensive picture can be obtained by considering multiple sources of evidence (Messick, 1989). Three basic sources of information were used in evaluation of the intelligence gathering component:.

- prior research studies
- interviews with program participants
- analyses of user feedback

**Prior Research Studies.** As noted above, one aspect of the laboratory research program was to identify those conditions that set bounds on the accuracy and success of the remote viewing process. Thus, one way to analytically evaluate potential applications in intelligence gathering is to enumerate the conditions under which viewers were assigned tasks and then examine the characteristics of the remote viewing paradigm as studied through experimentation in the laboratory. The conditions under which operational tasks occur—that is, the requirements imposed by intelligence gathering—could then provide an assessment of the applicability of the remote viewing process.

***Please note that tables***

***4-1 and 4-2 are missing***

***from this document.***

Another comparison between the Accuracy and Value scores can be made by considering the standard deviations for each. In all cases, the normal distribution for Value scores has a much sharper peak than for the Accuracy scores, i.e., the 1_ values are substantially smaller. This implies a better, albeit independent, understanding or agreement across all of the evaluators for the scoring of Value.

A review of the data in Table 4-2 provides several other observations:

- The average scores from the Org. B evaluators averaged 0.7 to 1.5 marks lower than those of the Org. C evaluators in all but one case (i.e., scores for 2V) even though the targets were similar. This discrepancy raises the suspicion that the difference is due to different evaluators' views of data provided from the Star Gate sources and/or different interpretations of the scoring criteria, i.e., the subjective nature of the whole process makes accountability and evaluation difficult (see Section 5). However, insights into the possible cause for this discrepancy and some substantiation for the suspicion noted above resulted from interviews with the operational users of these organizations. (See Section 6.0 and Appendix B.)

- Conversely, the Org. C evaluators were quite consistent in their average scoring considering the general uncertainty in the whole process. This consistency may have resulted from influence of the lead individual at that organization who was an adherent of using parapsychology and who ultimately adjudicated each evaluation provided by his analysts. (See Appendix B.)

- The highest scores for Accuracy occurred for the Org. D tasks (these received 5 of the 13 "1's" for Accuracy). As noted above, this tasking was directly relevant to information readily available in the open media during the same period which may have, knowingly or unknowingly, biased the RV-derived information.

- The marginally higher average scores for Org. A may result from several causes: the use of "beacons" to support the RV efforts, differences in the evaluator interpretations of the scoring measures or other subjective causes. In an interview with the four Org. A evaluators subsequent to the analysis of the numerical scoring discussed above, they indicated that the Accuracy scores were higher than one would anticipate from a "blind" evaluation due to the procedure they used for tasking and evaluation. This would seem to be the most plausible reason for the scoring discrepancy. (See Section 6.0 and Appendix B for a discussion of this procedure.)

- The cause of the exceptionally low scores given by the Org. E evaluator was identified during the interviews with that individual and are well delineated in Appendix B. In summary, the evaluator noted that the data provided were neither accurate nor specific enough to have any substantial value for operational use.

## 5.0 GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PROCESS

Several general observations were derived by the author from the review of the Star Gate operational tasking folders, each of which included the information derived by the RV's as well as the subsequent evaluator scoring and comment sheets.

As noted earlier, most tasking was nonspecific in terms of the information desired. Most task targets were generic, e.g., a name and nothing else. Knowledge of the identity of the tasking organization may have telegraphed the type of information of interest. The result of this approach, in general, was that much of the RV-provided information was an unstructured discourse on a variety of topics. It frequently had the characteristic that I would associate with "free association or stream of consciousness." The combination of the broad, unspecified nature of the tasking in conjunction with the resulting unstructured information from the RV makes evaluation difficult if not impossible. The evaluation process is subjective and, thereby, influenced by the beliefs, interests, whims, and fancies of each evaluator. Conversely, any "telegraphed" information acquired by the RV[13], whether by accident, inference or intention, makes Accuracy scoring suspect since some "accurate" information can be provided based upon that knowledge[14], e.g., "the target is involved in the financial transactions" would almost certainly be true of any targets requested for an organization interested in money laundering.

Correspondence between portions of the RV-derived information and the interests of the evaluator can be completely illusionary since the communication channels between the RV(s) and the evaluator:

- has a very narrow information bandwidth, i.e., the RV-derived information cannot be embellished by a dialogue with the evaluator without substantially telegraphing the evaluator's needs and interests, thereby biasing any RV information subsequently derived , and

- is extremely "noisy" as a result of the unidentifiable beliefs, intentions, knowledge, biases, etc. that reside in the subconsciousness of the RV(s) and/or the evaluator .

As a result, the potential for self-deception on the part of the evaluator exists, i.e, he/she "reads" into the RV information a degree of validity that in truth is based upon fragmentary, generalized information and which may have little real applicability to his/her problem. The relevant question in the overall evaluation process is who and what is being evaluated, i.e., is the score a measure of the RV's paranormal capabilities or of the evaluators views, beliefs and concepts?

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[13] Telegraphed by knowledge of the tasking organization and its interests and concerns or by tasking that relates to highly publicized media information during the same period.

[14] In addition, "Accuracy" is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for determining the utility of the information since "accurate information" may already been known by the tasker, or, even though accurate, may not have any utility for the tasker's problem.

One of the RV's expressed a concern to the author that the protocols that were followed in conducting the RV process in response to the operational tasking were not consistent with those that are generally specified for the study of paranormal phenomena. Whether the claimed discrepancy was detrimental to the information derived by the RV's,or to its subsequent evaluation or use cannot be determined from the available data.

The operational tasking noted earlier concerning activities in North Korea which required precognitive abilities on the part of the RV's provides an opportunity for a post-analysis by comparing the RV predictions against subsequent realities. Additional comparative data of this type is available from operational tasking during the period 11/90 through 1/91 regarding the Middle East situation (this tasking was not numerically evaluated).

## 6.0 SUMMARY FROM USER INTERVIEWS (U)

Subsequent to the review and analysis of the numerically scored tasking described in the previous sections of this report, the author participated in interviews with representatives of all of the tasking organizations presented in Table 4-1 except Org. D. Only a brief summary of the results from those interviews is presented here; more detailed synopses are presented in Appendix B. In all cases except for Org. C, the interviewees were the actual personnel who had participated directly in the tasking and evaluation of the Star Gate program. For Org. C, the sole interviewee was the Chief of the Analysis Branch; the staff who defined the tasking and performed the evaluations was comprised of his lead analysts.

A brief summary of the salient points which appeared consistently throughout these interviews follows:

- the principal motivation for using Star Gate services was the hope that something useful might result; the problems being addressed were very difficult and the users were justifiably (and admittedly) "grasping at straws" for anything that might be beneficial.

- the information provided by the Star Gate program was never specific enough to cause any operational user to task other intelligence assets to specifically corroborate the Star Gate information.

- while information that was provided did occasionally contain portions that were accurate, albeit general, it was - without exception - never specific enough to offer substantial intelligence value for the problem at hand.

- two of the operational user organizations would be willing to pay for this service if that was required and if it was not too expensive (although one user noted that his organization head would not agree). However, the fact that Star Gate service was free acted as an incentive to obtain "it might be useful - who knows" support for the program from the user organizations.

The reader is referred to Appendix B for additional information resulting from these interviews. However, two inconsistencies noted during the discussion of the numerical evaluations in Section 4.0 were supported by information obtained from the interviews.

On the average, the Org. C evaluators scored higher that those of Org. B. One cause for this discrepancy may be due to the fact that the Org. B evaluators were, in general, skeptical of the process while the lead person at Org. C claimed to be a believer in parapsychology and, in addition, had the last say in any evaluations that were promulgated back to the Star Gate PM. This comment is in no way intended to impugn the honesty or motivation of any of these personnel, merely to point out that this difference in the belief-structure of the staff at these two organizations may have resulted in the perceived scoring bias. As noted above, the subjectivity inherent in the entire process is impossible to eliminate or to account for in the results.

The higher average scoring, especially Accuracy scores, from the Org. A evaluators appears to be explained by the procedure they used to task and evaluate the experiments they were performing with the Star Gate program. Namely, they used a staff member as a "beacon" to "assist" the RV's in "viewing" the beacon's location. Subsequently, the same Org. A staff member evaluated the RV inputs. However, since he/she had been at the site, he/she could interpret anything the appeared to be related to the actual site as accurate. When asked if the information from the multiple RV's was sufficiently accurate and consistent such that a "blind" evaluator, i.e., one who did not know the characteristics of the site, would have been able to identify information from the RV inputs that they could interpret to be accurate, they all answered in the negative and agreed that the score would have been lower. Again the subjectivity of the process appears - the evaluator could interpret the admittedly general comments from any RV that seemed to relate to the actual site as "accurate", e.g., consider an RV input "there is water nearby", the evaluator knows this it true of almost anyplace especially if one does not or cannot define what kind of water, i.e., is it a lake, a water line, a commode, a puddle?

# 7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 7.1 CONCLUSIONS

The single conclusion that can be drawn from an evaluation of the 40 operational tasks is that the value and utility to the Intelligence Community of the information provided by the process cannot be readily discerned. This conclusion was initially based solely upon the analysis of the numerical evaluations presented in Section 4.0, but strong confirmation was provided by the results of the subsequent interviews with the tasking organizations (Ref. Section 6.0 and Appendix B). While, if one believes the validity of parapsychological phenomena, the potential for value exists in principal, there is, nonetheless, an alternative view of the phenomenology that would disavow any such value and, in fact, could claim that the ambiguous and subjective nature of the process actually creates a need for additional efforts with questionable operational return on the part of the intelligence analyst.

Normally, much of the data provided by the RV(s) is either wrong or irrelevant although one cannot always tell which is which without further investigation. Whether this reality reduces or eliminates the overall value of the totality of the information can only be assessed by the intelligence analyst. It clearly complicates his/her problem in two ways: 1) it adds to the overburden of unrelated data which every analyst already receives on a daily basis, i.e., the receipt of information of dubious authenticity and accuracy is not an uncommon occurrence for intelligence analysts, and 2) since the analyst does not normally know which information is wrong or irrelevant, some of it is actually "disinformation" and can result in wasted effort as the analyst attempts to verify or discount those data from other sources.

The review of the operational tasking and its subsequent evaluation does not provide any succinct conclusions regarding the validity of the process (or the information provided by it). First and foremost, as discussed in Section 5.0, the entire process, from beginning to end, is highly subjective. Further, as noted in Section 3.0, the degree of consistency in applying the scoring measures, any guidance or training provided to the evaluators by any of the tasking organizations and/or the motivation of the evaluators are either unknown or, in the case of the latter, may be highly polarized. (See Appendix B) The lack of information regarding these items could account for some of the variability in the scores across organizations noted in Table 4-2, but this cannot be certified and is, at most, a suspicion.
Whether the information provided by the Star Gate source is of sufficient value to overcome the obvious detriment of accommodating the irrelevant information included therein is an open question? More precisely, whether the Star Gate information is of sufficient value to continue this program - vis-a-vis other sources of information and other uses of resources - is an important question for the Intelligence Community to address, irrespective of one's personal views and/or beliefs regarding this field of endeavor, i.e., does the information provided justify the required resource investment?

One method that might assist this evaluation is to develop a means for scoring the complete input from the RV process, i.e., evaluate all information and determine how much is truly relevant, how much is of undeterminable value and how much is completely irrelevant. One could then analyze how much information is being handled to achieve the relevant information (along with some measure of the relevancy) and make judgments on its value vis-a-vis the investment in time and money. Other, less technical methods, for adjudicating this issue also exist.

## 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the statements above, the only sensible recommendation in this author's mind is to bring some "scientific method" into this process (if it is continued). As evidenced by more than 20 years of research into paranormal psychology, much of it done by institutions of higher education or others with excellent credentials in related fields, validation of parapsychological phenomena may never be accredited in the sense that is understood in other scientific and technical fields of endeavor . Control in any rigorous scientific sense of the multitude of human and physical variables which could, and probably do, influence this process is difficult - perhaps impossible - for any except the most mundane types of experiments, e.g., blind "reading" of playing cards.

Even these restricted experiments have led to controversy among those schooled in the related arts.

One of the foundation precepts of scientific endeavor is the ability to obtain repeatable data from independent researchers. Given the subjective nature of RV activities, it is difficult to believe that this aspect of parapsychology will ever be achieved. As an admitted neophyte in this area of endeavor, I categorize the field as a kind of religion, i.e., you either have "faith" that it indeed is something real, albeit fleeting and unique, or you "disbelieve" and attribute all positive results to either chicanery or pure chance.[15]

Thus, one must recognize at the start that any attempt to bring scientific method into the operational tasking aspects of this project may not succeed. Others with serious motives and intentions have attempted to do this with the results noted above. However, as a minimum, one could try to assure that the scoring measures are succinctly defined and promulgated such that different organizations and evaluators would have a better understanding of what is intended and, perhaps could be more consistent in their scoring. The use of independent, multiple evaluators on each task could aid in reducing some of the effects of the subjective nature of the evaluation process and the possible personal biases (intentional or otherwise) of the evaluators.

Since, according to some parapsychologists, the time of the remote viewing is not relevant to the attainment of the desired information, controlled "blind tests" could be run by requesting tasking for which the accurate and valuable information is already known to determine statistics on RV performance (clearly one key issue in such tests is what information is given to the RV in the task description to avoid any semblance of compromise, not a casual problem). Controlled laboratory experiments of parapsychology have done this type of testing and the results, usually expressed in terms of probability numbers that claim to validate the parapsychological results, have done little to quell the controversy that surrounds this field. Thus it may be naive and optimistic to believe that such additional testing would help resolve the question of the"value of the process" (or its utility for operational intelligence applications), but it might assist in either developing "faith" in those who use it, or conversely "disbelief."

Before additional operational tasks are conceived, some thought could be given to how and what one defines as a "target." Broad generic target descriptions permit unstructured discourse by the RV which - especially if there is a knowledge (or even a hint) of the general area of interest - leads to data open to very subjective, perhaps illusionary, interpretation regarding both accuracy and value. If some specificity regarding the target could be defined such that the relevance and accuracy of the RV-derived data could be evaluated more readily, some of the uncertainties might be eliminated. In this context, note that the cases where targets were more specific, e.g., the North Korean targets , the resulting scores were generally higher.

[15]Practitioners in the field, including those funded under government contracts, would argue with these observations, perhaps vehemently; some would argue further that the phenomenology has been verified beyond question already. This reviewer disagrees; albeit, these observations are not intended to discard the possibility of such phenomena.

Finally, it was noted in Section 5.0 that some of the RV information obtained from operational tasks regarding North Korea (and others concerning the Middle East) depended upon the precognitive ability of the RV's in predicting events yet to occur. These data provide an opportunity for a post-analysis of the accuracy of these predictions by making a comparison with subsequent information regarding actual events (some data for this comparison might require access to classified information from other sources). Such a post-analysis would provide data for evaluating the ability of the RV's to perform precognitive tasks and of the related operational value of the predictions. Performance of this post-analysis lies beyond the scope of this paper, but is a topic for a subsequent study if any sponsor is interested.

Appendix A to Appendix D:

***Please note that Appendix A to Appendix D is missing from this document.***

# Appendix B to Appendix D:

## STAR GATE OPERATIONAL USER INTERVIEW
ORGANIZATION: A
USER POC: #7
DATE: 3 August 1995

OPERATIONAL TASK: SG was asked to participate in a series of experiments to determine if their paranormal service could assist in locating someone who was at an unknown location and had no radio or other conventional method for communicating. Members of the user organization acted as "beacons" for the RV's by visiting sites unknown to the RV's at specified times. The RV's were requested to identify any information that would assist in determining the site location by "envisioning" what the beacons were seeing.

MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYING STAR GATE: The previous head of the user's group was aware of the program from other sources and requested that SG participate in these experiments in the hopes that some information might be obtained to assist in locating the sites and/or people given the scenario above This situation is similar to that noted from other user interviews, namely, the difficulty of obtaining relevant information from any other source renders the use of the paranormal approach as a worthwhile endeavor from the user's perspective "just in case" it provides something of value

USER ATTITUDE: All of the interviewees were positive regarding the application of this phenomenology to their problem, albeit they all agreed that the RV information provided from the experiments performed to date were inadequate to define the utility of the phenomena and that additional experiments were needed.

RESULTS - VALUE/UTILITY: For each user task, the evaluator was the same individual who had acted as the beacon, i.e., the person who had actually been at the candidate location. Each evaluator noted that some of the information provided by the RV's could be considered to be accurate. When asked if the accuracy of the information would be ranked as high if the evaluator did not know the specifics of the site, i.,e., had not be the "beacon, which is the real "operational situation", all answered in the negative. Several interviewees indicated that their interpretation of the RV data led them to believe that the RV's had witnessed other items or actions the beacon was engaged in but not related to the site of interest. As a result of the experiments done to date, the user decided that the approach being pursued was not providing information of operational utility since it was too general. However, the user was convinced of the possible value of the paranormal phenomena and was planning a new set of experiments using a substantially modified approach in the hope of obtaining useful results.

FUTURE USE OF SG SERVICES: As inferred above, the user would continue to use SG-type services, albeit in a new set of experiments. The user would be willing to pay for this service if it was not too expensive and requested that they be contacted if the program was reinitiated. When advised that they could obtain services of this type from commercial sources, they noted that this would be difficult due to the highly classified nature of some of their activities.

**Interviews.** As part of the Star Gate program, the services of remote viewers were used to support operational activities in the intelligence community. This operational history provides an additional basis for evaluating the Star Gate program; ultimately, if the program is to be of any real value, it must be capable of serving the needs of the intelligence community. By examining how the remote viewing services have been used, it becomes possible to draw some initial, tentative conclusions about the potential value of the Star Gate program. Below, we describe how information bearing on intelligence applications of the remote viewing phenomenon was gathered. Later, in Chapter 4, we describe the results of this information-gathering activity and draw some conclusions from the information we obtained.

Although a variety of techniques might be used to accrue retrospective information (questionnaires, interviews, diaries, etc.), the project team decided that structured interviews examining issues relevant to the various participants would provide the most appropriate strategy. Accordingly, structured interviews were developed for three participant groups in intelligence operations:

- end-users: representatives from agencies requesting information from remote viewers
- the Program Manager
- the remote viewers

Another key issue to be considered in an interview procedure is the nature of the people to be interviewed. Although end-users, program managers, and viewers represent the major participants, many different individuals have been involved in intelligence applications of remote viewing over the course of the last twenty years. Nevertheless, it was decided to interview only those persons who were involved in the program at the time of its suspension in the Spring of 1995. This decision was based on the need for accurate, current information that had not been distorted by time and could be corroborated by existing documentation and follow-up interviews.

Information about operational applications was gathered in a series of interviews conducted during July and August of 1995. We interviewed seven representatives of end-user groups, three remote viewers, and the incumbent Program Manager. With regard to the data collection procedures that we employed, a number of points should be borne in mind. First,

STAR GATE OPERATIONAL USER INTERVIEW
ORGANIZATION: B
USER POC: #3, et al
DATE: 14 July 1995

OPERATIONAL TASK: Most tasking requested information about future events, usually the time and/or place (or location) of a meeting. Some tasking requested additional information describing a person or a thing, e.g., a vessel. In one instance, after previous "blind" requests had yielded no useful information, the user met with the RV's and provided a picture and other relevant information about an individual in hope of obtaining useful information about his activities.

MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYING STAR GATE: SG PM briefed RV activities and his desire to expand customer base. User was willing to "try" using SG capabilities since there was no cost to the user and, given the very difficult nature of user business, "grasping at straws" in the hope of receiving some help is not unreasonable. Note that this organization had tasked the program in the '91 time frame but had not continued tasking in '92-'93 until briefed by the new Star Gate PM.

USER ATTITUDE: DIA POC was openly skeptical, but was willing to try objectively. Members of the organization he supports (Org. B) had varied levels of belief, one individual appear very supportive noting the successful use of psychics by law enforcement groups (based upon media reporting). Evaluation of the tasking was accomplished collectively by the DIA POC and three other Org. B members.

RESULTS - VALUE/UTILITY: None of the information provided in response to any of the tasks was specific enough to be of value or to warrant tasking other assets. SG data was too vague and generic, information from individual RV's regarding the same task were conflicting, contained many known inaccuracies and required too much personal interpretation to warrant subsequent action. User would be more supportive of process if data provided was more specific and/or closely identified with known information. In one instance, a drawing was provided which appeared to have similarity with a known vessel, but information was not adequate to act on.

FUTURE USE OF SG SERVICES: User would be willing to use SG-type services in future. However, in current budget environment, demonstrated value and utility are not adequate to justify funding from user resources. Would not fund in any case unless program could demonstrate a history of successful and useful product. User believes that RV's working directly with his analysts on specific problems would be beneficial in spite of the obvious drawbacks. Individual quoted above suggested recruiting RV's from other sources, noting his belief that the government RV's may not be best qualified, i.e., have best psychic capabilities.

STAR GATE OPERATIONAL USER INTERVIEW
ORGANIZATION: C
USER POC: #4
DATE: 26 July 1995

OPERATIONAL TASK: Most tasking requested information describing a person, a location or a thing, e.g., a vessel. Occasionally, the tasking would provide some relevant information about the target or "his/her/its" associates in hope of obtaining useful information about its activities.

MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYING STAR GATE: In circa 1993, the SG PM briefed RV activities and his desire to expand the customer base. This desire conjoined with the user's[16] belief that it provided an alternate source of information led to the subsequent tasking. User was willing to "try" using SG capabilities since there was no cost to the user and, as noted in other interviews, given the very difficult nature of the user's business, "grasping at straws" in the hope of receiving some help is not unreasonable. This organization had tasked the program in the (circa) '86-'90 time frame but had terminated tasking since there was no feedback mechanism.

USER ATTITUDE: User was a believer in the phenomena based upon his "knowledge of what the Soviets were doing" and his perceptions from the media regarding its use by law enforcement agencies. He noted that his lead analysts, who generated the tasking, were very skeptical, as was his management. User insisted that analysts be objective in spite of their skepticism. In general, numerical evaluation of the task was performed by the individual who had defined it.

RESULTS - VALUE/UTILITY: This interviewee claimed value and utility for the information provided by the RV's, noting that information regarding historical events was always more accurate that information requiring predictions. RV's were "fairly consistent' in identifying the "nature" of the target, e.g., is it a person or a thing, but not always. On occasions where RV inputs were corroborated, additional data were requested, but these data usually could not be corroborated. User commented that all reports had some accurate information[17], however, the SG data provided was either not specific enough and/or not timely enough to task other assets for additional information. Some SG data was included in "target packages" given to field operatives-however, there was no audit trail so there is no evidence regarding the accuracy or use of these data. User also noted that classification prohibited data dissemination as did concerns about skepticism of others regarding the source and the potential for a subsequent negative impact on his organization.

FUTURE USE OF SG SERVICES: User desires to continue using SG-type service if the

[16]Only one person provided all of the information at this review. Where the "user" or "interviewee" is cited, it reflects the remarks of that single individual.

[17]User was unaware that the tasking organization and its primary mission were known to the RV's. Portions of the data provided by the RV's could have been predicted from this knowledge.

program continues. In addition, the user stated that he would be willing to pay for the service if necessary. However, subsequent discussion indicated that his management would not fund the activity unless the credibility could be demonstrated better and the phenomenology legitimized. User went on to claim that only the sponsorship of a government agency could "legitimize " this activity and its application to operational problems. User believes that RV's working directly with his analysts on specific problems would not be beneficial due to the skepticism of his analysts and the deleterious impact that would have on the RV's. The views provided by the user - note none of the actual evaluators were present - appeared to be unique to him and his belief in the phenomenology, i.e., his remarks indicated that the use of this process was not actively supported by anyone else in his organization. The numerical evaluations of the 19 tasks performed in 1994/95 certainly do not indicate, on the average, either a high degree of accuracy or value of the data provided.

STAR GATE OPERATIONAL USER INTERVIEW
ORGANIZATION-. E
USER POC: #9
DATE: 7 July 1995

OPERATIONAL TASK: Request to assist in determining if a suspect was engaged in espionage activities, e.g., who is he meeting? where? about what? are these activities related to espionage or criminal actions? Tasking comprised a series of four sequential tasks, each time a bit more information was provided to the RV's, including at one point the name of the suspect. (Note: this "sequential tasking" is unique. Each of the tasks assigned from other operational organizations was a "singular" or "stand alone" event.)

MOTIVATION FOR EMPLOYING STAR GATE: SG PMO briefed RV activities and his desire to expand customer base. User was willing to "try" using SG capabilities since there was no cost to the user and, given the very difficult nature of user business, "grasping at straws" in the hope of receiving some help is not unreasonable.

USER ATTITUDE:

Pre-SG experience - User (#9) had a perception of beneficial assistance allegedly provided to domestic police by parapsychologists; thereby he was encouraged to try using the SG capabilities and hopeful of success.

Post-SG experience - Still very positive in spite of the lack of value or utility from SG efforts (see below). User is "willing to try anything" to obtain assistance in working his very difficult problems.

RESULTS - VALUE/UTILITY: None of the information provided in any of the four sequential tasks was specific enough to be of value or to warrant tasking his surveillance assets to collect on-

site information as a result of SG information. SG data was too generic and while it may have contained accurate information, it required too much personal interpretation to warrant subsequent actions by his assets. Much of the SG information was clearly wrong so there was no way to ascertain the validity of the rest. One major deficiency noted in the SG responses was the lack of any RV data regarding large fund transfers that the suspect was known to be engaged in and which the user believes would have been uppermost in the suspect's mind. User would be more supportive of process if data provided was more specific and/or closely identified with known information.

FUTURE USE OF SG SERVICES: User would be willing to use SG-type services in future. However, in current budget environment, demonstrated value and utility are not adequate to justify funding from user resources. User would be willing to have a joint activity whereby RV's work directly with his analysts on specific problems if: a) user did not pay for RV services and b) commitment for joint RV's services was long term , i.e., several years.

members of the groups we interviewed could only speak to recent operations. Although it would have been desirable to interview people involved in earlier operations, for example during the 1970s, the problems associated with the passage of time, including forgetting and the difficulties involved in verifying information, effectively precluded this approach. Accordingly, the interviews focused on current operations.

Second, it should be noted that the end-user representatives represented a range of current concerns in the intelligence community. The relevant user groups were involved in operations ranging from counterintelligence and drug interdiction to search and rescue operations. This diversity permitted operational merits to be assessed for a number of different contexts.

The interviews were conducted by one of the two panel members from AIR. A retired intelligence officer took notes during the interviews. A representative of the CIA attended interviews as necessary to describe the reasons the interviews were being conducted and to address any security concerns.

Each interview was conducted using a standard protocol. Different protocols were developed for members of the three groups because they had somewhat different perspectives on current operations. Appendix C presents the instructions given to the interviewer. This Appendix also lists the interview questions presented to users, viewers, and the program manager. User interviews were conducted in the offices of the client organization; interviews with the program manager and the viewers were conducted at the Washington Office of AIR. The interviews were one to two hours long. A total of 12 to 16 questions were asked in the interviews.

We developed the questions presented in each interview as follows: Initially, the literature on remote viewing and available information bearing on operations within the intelligence community were reviewed by AIR scientists. This review was used to formulate an initial set of interview questions. Subsequently, these candidate questions were presented to a panel of three psychologists at AIR. In addition, review panel members were asked to review these candidate questions to insure they were not leading and covered the issues that were relevant to the particular group under consideration.

# Executive Summary

Studies of paranormal phenomena have nearly always been associated with controversy. Despite the controversy concerning their nature and existence, many individuals and organizations continue to be avidly interested in these phenomena. The intelligence community is no exception: beginning in the 1970s, it has conducted a program intended to investigate the application of one paranormal phenomenon—***remote viewing,*** or the ability to describe locations one has not visited.

Conceptually, remote viewing would seem to have tremendous potential utility for the intelligence community. Accordingly, a three-component program involving basic research, operations, and foreign assessment has been in place for some time. Prior to transferring this program to a new sponsoring organization within the intelligence community, a thorough program review was initiated.

The part of the program review conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a nonprofit, private research organization, consisted of two main components. The first component was a review of the research program. The second component was a review of the operational application of the remote viewing phenomenon in intelligence gathering. Evaluation of the foreign assessment component of the program was not within the scope of the present effort.

## Research Evaluation

To evaluate the research program, a "blue ribbon" panel was assembled. The panel included two noted experts in the area of parapsychology: ***Dr. Jessica Utts***, a Professor of

With regard to operational users, four types of questions were asked. These four types of questions examined the background and nature of the tasks presented to the remote viewers, the nature and accuracy of the information resulting from the viewings, operational use of this information, and the utility of the resulting information.

The remote viewers were asked a somewhat different set of questions. The four types of questions presented to them examined recruitment, selection, and development; the procedures used to generate viewings; the conditions that influenced the nature and success of viewings; and the organizational factors that influenced program operations. The Program Manager was not asked about the viewing process. Instead, questions presented to the program manager primarily focused on broader organizational issues. The four types of managerial questions focused on the manager's background, client recruitment, factors influencing successes and failures, and needs for effective program management.

The interview questions presented in each protocol were asked in order, as specified in Appendix C. Typically these interviews began by asking for objective background information. Questions examining broader evaluative issues were asked at the end of the interview. The AIR scientist conducting the interviews produced reports for each individual interview. They also are contained in Appendix C.

**Analyses of User Feedback**. In addition to the qualitative data provided by the interviews, some quantitative information was available. For all of the operational tasks conducted during 1994, representatives from the requesting agencies were asked to provide two summary judgments: one with respect to the accuracy of the remote viewing, and the second of the actual or potential value of the information provided. These data—the accuracy and value evaluations obtained for viewings as program feedback from the users—were analyzed and summarized in a report prepared prior to the current evaluation. A copy of this report is provided in Appendix D. Although these judgments have been routinely collected for only a relatively short period of time, they provided an important additional source of evaluative information. This information was of some value as a supplement to interviews in part because it was collected prior to the start of the current review, and in part because it reflects user assessments of the resulting information.

We present the findings flowing from this multifaceted evaluation of the operational component of the program in Chapter 4 of this report. In that chapter, we first present the findings emerging from prior research and the interviews and then consider the results obtained from the more quantitative evaluations. Prior to turning to this evaluation of operations, however, we first present the findings from review of the basic research, examining evidence for the existence and nature of the remote viewing phenomenon.

# Chapter Three: Research Reviews

**Review 1 (Dr. Jessica Utts)**

**Review 2 (Dr. Ray Hyman)**

**The Reply (Dr. Jessica Utts)**

**Points of Agreement and Disagreement**

**Conclusions form the Expert Reviews**

In this chapter, we present the conclusions drawn by the two experts after reviewing the research studies bearing on remote viewing. We begin by presenting the review of Dr. Jessica Utts. Subsequently, a rejoinder is provided by Dr. Raymond Hyman. Finally, Dr. Utts presents a reply to Dr. Hyman. The major points of agreement and disagreement are noted in the final chapter, along with our conclusions.

In conducting their reviews, both Dr. Hyman and Dr. Utts focused on the remote viewing research. However, additional material is provided as indicated by the need to clarify certain points being made. Furthermore, both reviewers provided unusually comprehensive reviews considering not only classified program research, but also a number of earlier studies having direct bearing on the nature and significance of the phenomenon.

## Review 1

### An Assessment of the Evidence for Psychic Functioning

Dr. Jessica Utts
Division of Statistics, University of California, Davis
September 1, 1995

## ABSTRACT

Research on psychic functioning, conducted over a two decade period, is examined to determine whether or not the phenomenon has been scientifically established. A secondary question is whether or not it is useful for government purposes. The primary work examined in this report was government sponsored research conducted at Stanford Research Institute, later known as SRI International, and at Science Applications International Corporation, known as SAIC.

Using the standards applied to any other area of science, it is concluded that psychic functioning has been well established. The statistical results of the studies examined are far beyond what is expected by chance. Arguments that these results could be due to methodological flaws in the experiments are soundly refuted. Effects of similar magnitude to those found in government-sponsored research at SRI and SAIC have been replicated at a number of laboratories across the world. Such consistency cannot be readily explained by claims of flaws or fraud.

The magnitude of psychic functioning exhibited appears to be in the range between what social scientists call a small and medium effect. That means that it is reliable enough to be replicated in properly conducted experiments, with sufficient trials to achieve the long-run statistical results needed for replicability.

A number of other patterns have been found, suggestive of how to conduct more productive experiments and applied psychic functioning. For instance, it doesn't appear that a sender is needed. Precognition, in which the answer is known to no one until a future time, appears to work quite well. Recent experiments suggest that if there is a psychic sense then it works much like our

other five senses, by detecting change. Given that physicists are currently grappling with an understanding of time, it may be that a psychic sense exists that scans the future for major change, much as our eyes scan the environment for visual change or our ears allow us to respond to sudden changes in sound.

It is recommended that future experiments focus on understanding how this phenomenon works, and on how to make it as useful as possible. There is little benefit to continuing experiments designed to offer proof, since there is little more to be offered to anyone who does not accept the current collection of data.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to examine a body of evidence collected over the past few decades in an attempt to determine whether or not psychic functioning is possible. Secondary questions include whether or not such functioning can be used productively for government purposes, and whether or not the research to date provides any explanation for how it works.

There is no reason to treat this area differently from any other area of science that relies on statistical methods. Any discussion based on belief should be limited to questions that are not data-driven, such as whether or not there are any methodological problems that could substantially alter the results. It is too often the case that people on both sides of the question debate the existence of psychic functioning on the basis of their personal belief systems rather than on an examination of the scientific data.

One objective of this report is to provide a brief overview of recent data as well as the scientific tools necessary for a careful reader to reach his or her own conclusions based on that data. The tools consist of a rudimentary overview of how statistical evidence is typically evaluated, and a listing of methodological concerns particular to experiments of this type.

Government-sponsored research in psychic functioning dates back to the early 1970s when a program was initiated at what was then the Stanford Research Institute, now called SRI International. That program was in existence until 1989. The following year, government

sponsorship moved to a program at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) under the direction of Dr. Edwin May, who had been employed in the SRI program since the mid 1970s and had been Project Director from 1986 until the close of the program.

This report will focus most closely on the most recent work, done by SAIC. Section 2 describes the basic statistical and methodological issues required to understand this work; Section 3 discusses the program at SRI; Section 4 covers the SAIC work (with some of the details in an Appendix); Section 5 is concerned with external validation by exploring related results from other laboratories; Section 6 includes a discussion of the usefulness of this capability for government purposes and Section 7 provides conclusions and recommendations.

# 2. SCIENCE NOTES

## 2.1 DEFINITIONS AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

There are two basic types of functioning that are generally considered under the broad heading of psychic or paranormal abilities. These are classically known as **extrasensory perception** (ESP), in which one acquires information through unexplainable means and **psychokinesis,** in which one physically manipulates the environment through unknown means. The SAIC laboratory uses more neutral terminology for these abilities; they refer to ESP **as anomalous cognition (AC)** and to psychokinesis as **anomalous perturbation (AP).** The vast majority of work at both SRI and SAIC investigated anomalous cognition rather than anomalous perturbation, although there was some work done on the latter.

Anomalous cognition is further divided into categories based on the apparent source of the information. If it appears to come from another person, the ability is called **telepathy,** if it appears to come in real time but not from another person it is called **clairvoyance** and if the information could have only been obtained by knowledge of the future, it is called **precognition.**

It is possible to identify apparent precognition by asking someone to describe something for which the correct answer isn't known until later in time. It is more difficult to rule out precognition in experiments attempting to test telepathy or clairvoyance, since it is almost impossible to be sure

that subjects in such experiments never see the correct answer at some point in the future. These distinctions are important in the quest to identify an explanation for anomalous cognition, but do not bear on the existence issue.

The vast majority of anomalous cognition experiments at both SRI and SAIC used a technique known as **remote viewing.** In these experiments, a **viewer** attempts to draw or describe (or both) a **target** location, photograph, object or short video segment. All known channels for receiving the information are blocked. Sometimes the viewer is assisted by a **monitor** who asks the viewer questions; of course in such cases the monitor is blind to the answer as well. Sometimes a sender is looking at the target during the session, but sometimes there is no sender. In most cases the viewer eventually receives **feedback** in which he or she learns the correct answer, thus making it difficult to rule out precognition as the explanation for positive results, whether or not there was a sender.

Most anomalous cognition experiments at SRI and SAIC were of the free-response type, in which viewers were simply asked to describe the target. In contrast, a **forced-choice** experiment is one in which there are a small number of known choices from which the viewer must choose. The latter may be easier to evaluate statistically but they have been traditionally less successful than free-response experiments. Some of the work done at SAIC addresses potential explanations for why that might be the case.

## 2.2 STATISTICAL ISSUES AND DEFINITIONS

Few human capabilities are perfectly replicable on demand. For example, even the best hitters in the major baseball leagues cannot hit on demand. Nor can we predict when someone will hit or when they will score a home run. In fact, we cannot even predict whether or not a home run will occur in a particular game. That does **not** mean that home runs don't exist.

Scientific evidence in the statistical realm is based on replication of the same average performance or relationship *over the long run.* We would not expect a fair coin to result in five heads and five tails over each set of ten tosses, but we can expect the proportion of heads and tails to settle down to about one half over a very long series of tosses. Similarly, a good baseball hitter will not hit the ball exactly the same proportion of times in each game but should be relatively consistent over the long run.

The same should be true of psychic functioning. Even if there truly is an effect, it may never be replicable on demand in the short run even if we understand how it works. However, over the long run in well-controlled laboratory experiments we should see a consistent level of functioning, above that expected by chance. The anticipated level of functioning may vary based on the individual players and the conditions, just as it does in baseball, but given players of similar ability tested under similar conditions the results should be replicable over the long run. In this report we will show that replicability in that sense has been achieved.

**2.2.1 P-VALUES AND COMPARISON WITH CHANCE.** In any area of science, evidence based on statistics comes from comparing what actually happened to what should have happened by chance. For instance, without any special interventions about 51 percent of births in the United States result in boys. Suppose someone claimed to have a method that enabled one to increase the chances of having a baby of the desired sex. We could study their method by comparing how often births resulted in a boy when that was the intended outcome. If that percentage was higher than the chance percentage of 51 percent *over the long run*, then the claim would have been supported by statistical evidence.

Statisticians have developed numerical methods for comparing results to what is expected by chance. Upon observing the results of an experiment, the p-value is the answer to the following question: *If chance alone is responsible for the results, how likely would we be to observe results this strong or stronger?* If the answer to that question, i.e. the *p-value* is very small, then most researchers are willing to rule out chance as an explanation. In fact it is commonly accepted practice to say that if the *p-value* is 5 percent (0.05) or less, then we can rule out chance as an explanation. In such cases, the results are said to be statistically significant. Obviously the smaller the *p-value,* the more convincingly chance can be ruled out.

Notice that when chance alone is at work, we *erroneously* find a statistically significant result about 5 percent of the time. For this reason and others, most reasonable scientists require replication of non-chance results before they are convinced that chance can be ruled out.

**2.2.2 REPLICATION AND EFFECT SIZES:** In the past few decades scientists have realized that true replication of experimental results should focus on the magnitude of the effect, or the

effect size rather than on replication of the *p-value*. This is because the latter is heavily dependent on the size of the study. In a very large study, it will take only a small magnitude effect to convincingly rule out chance. In a very small study, it would take a huge effect to convincingly rule out chance.

In our hypothetical sex-determination experiment, suppose 70 out of 100 births designed to be boys actually resulted in boys, for a rate of 70 percent instead of the 51 percent expected by chance. The experiment would have a *p-value of* 0.0001, quite convincingly ruling out chance. Now suppose someone attempted to replicate the experiment with only ten births and found 7 boys, i.e. also 70 percent. The smaller experiment would have a *p-value of* 0.19, and would not be statistically significant. If we were simply to focus on that issue, the result would appear to be a failure to replicate the original result, even though it achieved exactly the same 70 percent boys! In only ten births it would require 90 percent of them to be boys before chance could be ruled out. Yet the 70 percent rate is a more exact replication of the result than the 90 percent.

Therefore, while *p-values* should be used to assess the overall evidence for a phenomenon, they should not be used to define whether or not a replication of an experimental result was "successful." Instead, a successful replication should be one that achieves an effect that is within expected statistical variability of the original result, or that achieves an even stronger effect for explainable reasons.

A number of different *effect size* measures are in use in the social sciences, but in this report we will focus on the one used most often in remote viewing at SRI and SAIC. Because the definition is somewhat technical it is given in Appendix 1. An intuitive explanation will be given in the next subsection. Here, we note that an effect size of 0 is consistent with chance, and social scientists have, by convention, declared an effect size of 0.2 as small, 0.5 as medium and 0.8 as large. A medium effect size is supposed to be visible to the naked eye of a careful observer, while a large effect size is supposed to be evident to any observer.

**2.2.3 RANDOMNESS AND RANK-ORDER JUDGING.** At the heart of any statistical method is a definition of what should happen "randomly" or "by chance." Without a random mechanism, there **can** be no statistical evaluation.

There is nothing random about the responses generated in anomalous cognition experiments; in other words, there is no way to define what they would look like "by chance." Therefore, the random mechanism in these experiments must be in the choice of the target. In that way, we can compare the response to the target and answer the question: "If chance alone is at work, what is the probability that a *target* would be chosen that matches this *response* as well as or better than does the actual target?"
In order to accomplish this purpose, a properly conducted experiment uses a set of targets defined in advance. The target for each remote viewing is then selected randomly, in such a way that the probability of getting each possible target is known.

The SAIC remote viewing experiments and all but the early ones at SRI used a statistical evaluation method known as rank-order **judging.** After the completion of a remote viewing, a judge who is blind to the true target (called a **blind** judge) is shown the response and five potential targets, one of which is the correct answer and the other four of which are "decoys." Before the experiment is conducted each of those five choices must have had an equal chance of being selected as the actual target. The judge is asked to assign a rank to each of the possible targets, where a rank of one means it matches the response most closely, and a rank of five means it matches the least.

The rank of the correct target is the numerical score for that remote viewing. By chance alone the actual target would receive each of the five ranks with equal likelihood, since despite what the response said the target matching it best would have the same chance of selection as the one matching it second best and so on. The average rank by chance would be three. Evidence for anomalous cognition occurs when the average rank over a series of trials is significantly lower than three. (Notice that a rank of one is the best possible score for each viewing.)

This scoring method is conservative in the sense that it gives no extra credit for an excellent match. A response that describes the target almost perfectly will achieve the same rank of one as a response that contains only enough information to pick the target as the best choice out of the five possible choices. One advantage of this method is that it is still valid even if the viewer knows the set of possible targets. The probability of a first place match by chance would still be only one in five. This is important because the later SRI and many of the SAIC experiments used the same large set of *National Geographic* photographs as targets. Therefore, the experienced viewers

Statistics at the University of California/Davis, and ***Dr. Raymond Hyman,*** a Professor of Psychology at the University of Oregon. In addition to their extensive credentials, they were selected to represent both sides of the paranormal controversy: Dr. Utts has published articles that view paranormal interpretations positively, while Dr. Hyman was selected to represent a more skeptical position. Both, however, are viewed as fair and open-minded scientists. In addition to these experts, this panel included two Senior Scientists from AIR; both have recognized methodological expertise, and both had no prior background in parapsychological research. They were included in the review panel to provide an unbiased methodological perspective. In addition, ***Dr. Lincoln Moses***, an Emeritus Professor at Stanford University, provided statistical advice, while ***Dr. David A. Goslin***, President of AIR, served as coordinator of the research effort.

Panel members were asked to review all laboratory experiments and meta-analytic reviews conducted as part of the research program; this consisted of approximately 80 separate publications, many of which are summary reports of multiple experiments. In the course of this review, special attention was given to those studies that (a) provided the strongest evidence for the remote viewing phenomenon, and ( b) represented new experiments controlling for methodological artifacts identified in earlier reviews. Separate written reviews were prepared by Dr. Utts and Dr. Hyman. They exchanged reviews with other panel members who then tried to reach a consensus.

In the typical remote viewing experiment in the laboratory, a remote viewer is asked to visualize a place, location, or object being viewed by a "beacon" or sender. A judge then examines the viewer's report and determines if this report matches the target or, alternatively, a set of decoys. In most recent laboratory experiments reviewed for the present evaluation, National Geographic photographs provided the target pool. If the viewer's reports match the target, as opposed to the decoys, a hit is said to have occurred. Alternatively, accuracy of a set of remote viewing reports is assessed by rank-ordering the similarity of each remote viewing report to each photograph in the target set (usually five photographs). A better-than-chance score is presumed to represent the occurrence of the paranormal phenomenon of remote viewing, since the remote viewers had not seen the photographs they had described (or did not know which photographs had been randomly selected for a particular remote viewing trial).

would eventually become familiar with the range of possibilities since they were usually shown the answer at the end of each remote viewing session.

For technical reasons explained in Appendix 1, the effect size for a series of remote viewings using rank-order judging with five choices is (3.0 - average rank)//2. Therefore, small, medium and large effect sizes (0.2, 0.5 and 0.8) correspond to average ranks of 2.72, 2.29, and 1.87, respectively. Notice that the largest effect size possible using this method is 1.4, which would result if every remote viewing achieved a first place ranking.

## 2.3 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

One of the challenges in designing a good experiment in any area of science is to close the loopholes that would allow explanations other than the intended one to account for the results.

There are a number of places in remote viewing experiment where information could be conveyed by normal means if proper precautions are not taken. The early SRI experiments suffered from some of those problems, but the later SRI experiments and the SAIC work were done with reasonable methodological rigor, with some exceptions noted in the detailed descriptions of the SAIC experiments in Appendix 2.

The following list of methodological issues shows the variety of concerns that must be addressed. It should be obvious that a well-designed experiment requires careful thought and planning:

- No one who has knowledge of the specific target should have any contact with the viewer until after the response has been safely secured.

- No one who has knowledge of the specific target or even of whether or not the session was successful should have any contact with the judge until after that task has been completed.

- No one who has knowledge of the specific target should have access to the response until after the judging has been completed.

- Targets and decoys used in judging should be selected using a well-tested randomization device.

- Duplicate sets of targets photographs should be used, one during the experiment and one during the judging, so that no cues (like fingerprints) can be inserted onto the target that would help the judge recognize it.
- The criterion for stopping an experiment should be defined in advance so that it is not called to a halt when the results just happen to be favorable. Generally, that means specifying the number of trials in advance, but some statistical procedures require or allow other stopping rules. The important point is that the rule be defined in advance in such a way that there is no ambiguity about when to stop.

- Reasons, if any, for excluding data must be defined in advance and followed consistently, and should not be dependent on the data. For example, a rule specifying that a trial could be aborted if the viewer felt ill would be legitimate, but only if the trial was aborted before anyone involved in that decision knew the correct target.

- Statistical analyses to be used must be planned in advance of collecting the data so that a method most favorable to the data isn't selected *post hoc*. If multiple methods of analysis are used the corresponding conclusions must recognize that fact.

## 2.4 PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE

According to *Webster's Dictionary,* in law *prima facie* evidence is "evidence having such a degree of probability that it must prevail unless the contrary be proved." There are a few examples of applied, non-laboratory remote viewings provided to the review team that would seem to meet that criterion for evidence. These are examples in which the sponsor or another government client asked for a single remote viewing of a site, known to the requester in real time or in the future, and the viewer provided details far beyond what could be taken as a reasonable guess. Two such examples are given by May (1995) in which it appears that the results were so striking that they far exceed the phenomenon as observed in the laboratory. Using a *post hoc* analysis, Dr. May concluded that in one of the cases the remote viewer was able to describe a microwave generator

with 80 percent accuracy, and that of what he said almost 70 percent of it was reliable. Laboratory remote viewings rarely show that level of correspondence.

Notice that standard statistical methods cannot be used in these cases because there is no standard for probabilistic comparison. But evidence gained from applied remote viewing cannot be dismissed as inconsequential just because we cannot assign specific probabilities to the results. It is most important to ascertain whether or not the information was achievable in other standard ways. In Chapter 3 an example is given in which a remote viewer allegedly gave codewords from a secret facility that he should not have even known existed. Suppose the sponsors could be absolutely certain that the viewer could not have known about those codewords through normal means. Then even if we can't assign an exact probability to the fact that he guessed them correctly, we can agree that it would be very small. That would seem to constitute *prima facie* evidence unless an alternative explanation could be found. Similarly, the viewer who described the microwave generator allegedly knew only that the target was a technical site in the United States. Yet, he drew and described the microwave generator, including its function, its approximate size, how it was housed and that it had "a beam divergence angle of 30 degrees" (May, 1995, p. 15).

Anecdotal reports of psychic functioning suffer from a similar problem in terms of their usefulness as proof. They have the additional difficulty that the "response" isn't even welldefined in advance, unlike in applied remote viewing where the viewer provides a fixed set of information on request. For instance, if a few people each night happen to dream of plane crashes, then some will obviously do so on the night before a major plane crash. Those individuals may interpret the coincidental timing as meaningful. This is undoubtedly the reason many people think the reality of psychic functioning is a matter of belief rather than science, since they are more familiar with the provocative anecdotes than with the laboratory evidence.

# 3. THE SRI ERA

## 3.1 EARLY OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES AND EVALUATION

According to Puthoff and Targ (1975) the scientific research endeavor at SRI may never have been supported had it not been for three apparent operational successes in the early days of the

program. These are detailed by Puthoff and Targ (1975), although the level of the matches is not clearly delineated.

One of the apparent successes concerned the "West Virginia Site" in which two remote viewers purportedly identified an underground secret facility. One of them apparently named codewords and personnel in this facility accurately enough that it set off a security investigation to determine how that information could have been leaked. Based only on the coordinates of the site, the viewer first described the above ground terrain, then proceeded to describe details of the hidden underground site.

The same viewer then claimed that he could describe a similar Communist Bloc site and proceeded to do so for a site in the Urals. According to Puthoff and Targ "the two reports for the West Virginia Site, and the report for the Urals Site were verified by personnel in the sponsor organization as being substantially correct (p. 8)."

The third reported operational success concerned an accurate description of a large crane and other information at a site in Semipalatinsk, USSR. Again the viewer was provided with only the geographic coordinates of the site and was asked to describe what was there.

Although some of the information in these examples was verified to be highly accurate, the evaluation of operational work remains difficult, in part because there is no chance baseline for comparison (as there is in controlled experiments) and in part because of differing expectations of different evaluators. For example, a government official who reviewed the Semipalatinsk work concluded that there was no way the remote viewer could have drawn the large gantry crane unless "he actually saw it through remote viewing, or he was informed of what to draw by someone knowledgeable of [the site]." Yet that same analyst concluded that "the remote viewing of [the site] by subject S1 proved to be unsuccessful" because "the only positive evidence of the rail-mounted gantry crane was far outweighed by the large amount of negative evidence noted in the body of this analysis." In other words, the analyst had the expectation that in order to be "successful" a remote viewing should contain accurate information only.

Another problem with evaluating this operational work is that there is no way to know with certainty that the subject did not speak with someone who had knowledge of the site, however

unlikely that possibility may appear. Finally, we do not know to what degree the results in the reports were selectively chosen because they were correct. These problems can all be avoided with well designed controlled experiments.

## 3.2 THE EARLY SCIENTIFIC EFFORT AT SRI

During 1974 and early 1975 a number of controlled experiments were conducted to see if various types of target material could be successfully described with remote viewing. The results reported by Puthoff and Targ (1975) indicated success with a wide range of material, from "technical" targets like a Xerox machine to natural settings, like a swimming pool. But these and some of the subsequent experiments were criticized on statistical and methodological grounds; we briefly describe one of the experiments and criticisms of it to show the kinds of problems that existed in the early scientific effort.

The largest series during the 1973 to 1975 time period involved remote viewing of natural sites. Sites were randomly selected for each trial from a set of 100 possibilities. They were selected "without replacement," meaning that sites were not reused once they had been selected. The series included eight viewers, including two supplied by the sponsor. Many of the descriptions showed a high degree of subjective correspondence, and the overall statistical results were quite striking for most of the viewers.

Critics attacked these experiments on a number of issues, including the selection of sites without replacement and the statistical scoring method used. The results were scored by having a blind judge attempt to match the target material with the transcripts of the responses. A large fraction of the matches were successful. But critics noted that some successful matching could be attained just from cues contained in the transcripts of the material, like when a subject mentioned in one session what the target had been in the previous session. Because sites were selected without replacement, knowing what the answer was on one day would exclude that target site from being the answer on any other day. There was no way to determine the extent to which these problems influence the results. The criticisms of these and subsequent experiments, while perhaps unwelcome at the time, have resulted in substantially improved methodology in these experiments.

## 3.3 AN OVERALL ANALYSIS OF THE SRI EXPERIMENTS: 1973-1988

In 1988 an analysis was made of all of the experiments conducted at SRI from 1973 until that time (May et al, 1988). The analysis was based on all 154 experiments conducted during that era, consisting of over 26,000 individual trials. Of those, almost 20,000 were of the forced choice type and just over a thousand were laboratory remote viewings. There were a total of 227 subjects in all experiments.

The statistical results were so overwhelming that results that extreme or more so would occur only about once in every $10^{20}$ such instances if chance alone is the explanation (i.e., the p-*value* was less than $10^{-20}$). Obviously some explanation other than chance must be found. Psychic functioning may not be the only possibility, especially since some of the earlier work contained methodological problems. However, the fact that the same level of functioning continued to hold in the later experiments, which did not contain those flaws, lends support to the idea that the methodological problems cannot account for the results. In fact, there was a talented group of subjects (labeled G1 in that report) for whom the effects were stronger than for the group at large. According to Dr. May, the majority of experiments with that group were conducted later in the program, when the methodology had been substantially improved.

In addition to the statistical results, a number of other questions and patterns were examined. A summary of the results revealed the following:

1. "Free response" remote viewing, in which subjects describe a target, was much more successful than "forced choice" experiments, in which subjects were asked to choose from a small set of possibilities.

2. There was a group of six selected individuals whose performance far exceeded that of unselected subjects. The fact that these same selected individuals consistently performed better than others under a variety of protocols provides a type of replicability that helps substantiate the validity of the results. If methodological problems were responsible for the results, they should not have affected this group differently from others.

3. Mass-screening efforts found that about one percent of those who volunteered to be tested were consistently successful at remote viewing. This indicates that remote viewing is an ability that differs across individuals, much like athletic ability or musical talent. (Results of mass screenings were not included in the formal analysis because the

conditions were not well-controlled, but the subsequent data from subjects found during mass-screening were included.)

4. Neither practice nor a variety of training techniques consistently worked to improve remote viewing ability. It appears that it is easier to find than to train good remote viewers.

5. It is not clear whether or not feedback (showing the subject the right answer) is necessary, but it does appear to provide a psychological boost that may increase performance.

6. Distance between the target and the subject does not seem to impact the quality of the remote viewing.

7. Electromagnetic shielding does not appear to inhibit performance.

8. There is compelling evidence that precognition, in which the target is selected after the subject has given the description, is also successful.

9. There is no evidence to support anomalous perturbation (psychokinesis), i.e. physical interaction with the environment by psychic means.

## 3.4 CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER LABORATORIES IN THE SAME ERA

One of the hallmarks of a real phenomenon is that its magnitude is replicable by various researchers working under similar conditions. The results of the overall SRI analysis are consistent with results of similar experiments in other laboratories. For instance, an overview of forced choice precognition experiments (Honorton and Ferrari, 1989) found an average "effect size" per experimenter of 0.033, whereas all forced choice experiments at SRI resulted in a similar effect size of .052. The comparison is not ideal since the SRI forced choice experiments were not necessarily precognitive and they used different types of target material than the standard card-guessing experiments.

Methodologically sound remote viewing has not been undertaken at other laboratories, but a similar regime called the ganzfeld (described in more detail in Chapter 5) has shown to be similarly successful. The largest collection of ganzfeld experiments was conducted from 1983 to 1989 at the Psychophysical Research Laboratories in Princeton, NJ. Those experiments were also

reported by separating novices from experienced subjects. The overall effect size for novice remote viewing at SRI was 0.164, while the effect size for novices in the ganzfeld at PRL was a very similar 0.17. For experienced remote viewers at SRI the overall effect size was 0.385; for experienced viewers in the ganzfeld experiments it was 0.35. These consistent results across laboratories help refute the idea that the successful experiments at any one lab are the result of fraud, sloppy protocols or some methodological problem and also provide an indication of what can be expected in future experiments.

# 4. THE SAIC ERA

## 4.1 AN OVERVIEW

The review team decided to focus more intensively on the experiments conducted at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), because they provide a manageable yet varied set to examine in detail. They were guided by a Scientific Oversight Committee consisting of experts in a variety of disciplines, including a winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics, internationally known professors of statistics, psychology, neuroscience and astronomy and a medical doctor who is a retired U.S. Army Major General. Further, we have access to the details for the full set of SAIC experiments, unlike for the set conducted at SRI. Whatever details may be missing from the written reports are obtainable from the principal investigator, Dr. Edwin May, to whom we have been given unlimited access.

In a memorandum dated July 25, 1995, Dr. Edwin May listed the set of experiments conducted by SAIC. There were ten experiments, all designed to answer questions about psychic functioning, raised by the work at SRI and other laboratories, rather than just to provide additional proof of its existence. Some of the experiments were of a similar format to the remote viewing experiments conducted at SRI and we can examine those to see whether or not they replicated the SRI results. We will also examine what new knowledge can be gained from the results of the SAIC work.

## 4.2 THE TEN EXPERIMENTS

Of the ten experiments done at SAIC, six of them involved remote viewing and four did not. Rather than list the details in the body of this report, Appendix 2 gives a brief description of the experiments. What follows is a discussion of the methodology and results for the experiments as a whole. Because of the fundamental differences between remote viewing and the other types of experiments, we discuss them separately.

In the memorandum of 25 July 1995, Dr. May provided the review team with details of the ten experiments, including a short title, number of trials, effect size and overall p-value for each one. His list was in time sequence. It is reproduced in Table 1, using his numbering system, with the experiments categorized by type, then sequentially within type. The effect size estimates are based on a limited number of trials, so they are augmented with an interval to show the probable range of the true effect (e.g. .124+.071 indicates a range from .053 to .195). Remember that an effect size of 0 represents chance, while a positive effect size indicates positive results.

| TABLE 1: SAIC EXPERIMENTS LISTED BY DR. EDWIN MAY | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expr | Title | Trials | Effect Size | *p-value* |
| Remote Viewing Experiments | | | | |
| 1 | Target dependencies | 200 | .124 +/− .071 | 0.040 |
| 4 | AC with binary coding | 40 | -.067 +/− .158 | 0.664 |
| 5 | AC lucid dreams, base | 24 | .088 +/− .204 | 0.333 |
| 6 | AC lucid dreams, pilot | 21 | .368 +/− .218 | 0.046 |
| 9 | ERD AC Behavior | 70 | .303 +/− .120 | 0.006 |
| 10 | Entropy II | 90 | .550 +/− .105 | $9.1X10^{-8}$ |
| Other Experiments | | | | |
| 2 | AC of binary targets | 300 | .123 +/− .058 | 0.017 |
| 3 | MEG Replication | 12,000s | MCE | MCE |
| 7 | Remote observation | 48 | .361 +/− .144 | 0.006 |
| 8 | ERD EEG investigation | 7,000s | MCE | MCE |

## 4.3 ASSESSING THE REMOTE VIEWING EXPERIMENTS BY HOMOGENEOUS SETS OF SESSIONS

While Table 1 provides an overall assessment of the results of each experiment, it does so at the expense of information about variability among viewers and types of targets. In terms of understanding the phenomenon, it is important to break the results down into units that are as homogeneous as possible in terms of procedure, individual viewer and type of target. This is also important in order to assess the impact of any potential methodological problems. For example, in one pilot experiment (E6, AC in Lucid Dreams) viewers were permitted to take the targets home

In evaluating the various laboratory studies conducted to date, the reviewers reached the following conclusions:

- A statistically significant laboratory effort has been demonstrated in the sense that hits occur more often than chance.

- It is unclear whether the observed effects can unambiguously be attributed to the paranormal ability of the remote viewers as opposed to characteristics of the judges or of the target or some other characteristic of the methods used. Use of the same remote viewers, the same judge, and the same target photographs makes it impossible to identify their independent effects.

- Evidence has not been provided that clearly demonstrates that the ***causes*** of hits are due to the operation of paranormal phenomena; the laboratory experiments have not identified the origins or nature of the remote viewing phenomenon, if, indeed, it exists at all.

## Operational Evaluation

The second component of the program involved the use of remote viewing in gathering intelligence information. Here, representatives of various intelligence groups—"end users" of intelligence information—presented targets to remote viewers, who were asked to describe the target. Typically, the remote viewers described the results of their experiences in written reports, which were forwarded to the end users for evaluation and, if warranted, action.

To assess the operational value of remote viewing in intelligence gathering, a multifaceted evaluation strategy was employed. First, the relevant research literature was reviewed to identify whether the conditions applying during intelligence gathering would reasonably permit application of the remote viewing paradigm. Second, members of three groups involved in the program were interviewed: (1) end users of the information; (2) the remote viewers providing the reports, and (3) the program manager. Third, feedback information

with them in sealed envelopes. Table 2 presents the effect size results at the most homogeneous level possible based on the information provided. For descriptions of the experiments, refer to Appendix 2. Overall effect sizes for each viewer and total effect sizes for each experiment are weighted according to the number of trials, so each trial receives equal weight.

TABLE 2: INDIVIDUAL EFFECT SIZES

| Experiment | Experiment Remote Viewers | | | | | Viewer | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 009 | 131 | 372 | 389 | 518 | Unknown/ Other | Total |
| | Static Targets (*National Geographic*) | | | | | | |
| E1: Static | .424 | -.071 | .424 | .177 | .283 | n.a. | .247 |
| E9 | .432 | n.a. | .354 | .177 | n.a. | n.a. | .303 |
| E10: Static | .566 | n.a. | .801 | -.071 | .778 | n.a. | .550 |
| E5 (Note 1) | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | .088 | .088 |
| E6 (Note 2) | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | .370 | .370 |
| E4 (Note 3) | -.112 | n.a. | 0 | n.a. | .112 | -.559 | -.067 |
| | Dynamic Targets (Video Film Clips) | | | | | | |
| E1: Dynamic | 0 | .354 | -.283 | 0 | -.071 | n.a. | .000 |
| E10: Dynamic | .919 | n.a. | .754 | 0 | .424 | n.a. | .550 |
| Overall | .352 | .141 | .340 | .090 | .271 | n.a. | |

**Notes:**

1. Experiment 5 did not include any expert viewers.
2. Experiment 6 included 4 expert viewers but separate results were not provided.
3. Experiment 4 used a specially designed target set and only 4 choices in judging.

## 4.4 CONSISTENCY AND REPLICABILITY OF THE REMOTE VIEWING RESULTS

One of the most important hallmarks of science is replicability. A phenomenon with statistical variability, whether it is scoring home runs in baseball, curing a disease with chemotherapy or observing psychic functioning, should exhibit about the same level of success in the long run, over repeated experiments of a similar nature. The remote viewing experiments are no exception. Remember that such events should not replicate with any degree of precision in the short run because of statistical variability, just as we would not expect to always get five heads and five tails if we flip a coin ten times, or see the same batting averages in every game.

The analysis of SRI experiments conducted in 1988 singled out the laboratory remote viewing sessions performed by six "expert" remote viewers, numbers 002, 009, 131, 372, 414 and 504. These six individuals contributed 196 sessions. The resulting effect size was 0.385 (May et al, 1988, p. 13). The SRI analysis does not include information individually by viewer, nor does it include information about how many of the 196 sessions used static versus dynamic targets. One report provided to the review team (May, Lantz and Piantineda) included an additional experiment conducted after the 1988 review was performed, in which Viewer 009 participated with 40 sessions. The effect size for Viewer 009 for those sessions was .363. None of the other five SRI experts were participants.

The same subject identifying numbers were used at SAIC, so we can compare the performance for these individuals at SRI and SAIC. Of the six, three were specifically mentioned as participating in the SAIC remote viewing experiments. As can be seen in Table 2, viewers 009, 131 and 372 all participated in Experiment 1 and viewers 009 and 372 participated in Experiments 4, 9 and 10 as well.

The overall effect sizes for two of the three, viewers 009 and 372, were very close to the SRI effect size of 0.385 for these subjects, at .35 and .34, respectively, and the .35 effect size for Viewer 009 was very similar to his .363 effect size in the report by May, Lantz and Piantineda (1994). Therefore, we see a repeated and, more importantly, hopefully a repeatable level of functioning above chance for these individuals. An effect of this size should be reliable enough to be sustained in any properly conducted experiment with enough trials to obtain the long run statistical replicability required to rule out chance.

It is also important to notice that viewers 009 and 372 did well on the same experiments and poorly on the same experiments. In fact the correlation between their effect sizes across experiments is .901, which is very close to a perfect correlation of 1.0. This kind of consistency warrants investigation to determine whether it is the nature of the experiments, a statistical fluke or some methodological problems that led these two individuals to perform so closely to one another. If methodological problems are responsible, then they must be subtle indeed because the methodology was similar for many of the experiments, yet the results were not. For instance, procedures for the sessions with static and dynamic targets in Experiment 1 were almost identical to each other, yet the dynamic targets did not produce evidence of psychic functioning *(p-value* = .50) and the static targets did *(p-value* = .0073). Therefore, a methodological problem would have had to differentially affect results for the two types of targets, even though the assignment of target type was random across sessions.

## 4.5 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE REMOTE VIEWING EXPERIMENTS AT SAIC

As noted in Section 2.3, there are a number of methodological considerations needed to perform a careful remote viewing experiment. Information necessary to determine how well each of these were addressed is generally available in the reports, but in some instances I consulted Dr. May for additional information. As an example of how the methodological issues in Section 2.3 were addressed, an explanation will be provided for Experiment 1.

In this experiment the viewers all worked from their homes (in New York, Kansas, California, and Virginia). Dr. Nevin Lantz, who resided in Pennsylvania, was the principal investigator. After each session, viewers faxed their response to Dr. Lantz and mailed the original to SAIC. Upon receipt of the fax, Dr. Lantz mailed the correct answer to the viewer. The viewers were supposed to mail their original responses to SAIC immediately, after faxing them to Dr. Lantz. According to Dr. May, the faxed versions were later compared with the originals to make sure the originals were sent without any changes. Here are how the other methodological issues in Chapter 2.3 were handled:

- *No one who has knowledge of the specific target should have any contact with the viewer until after the response has been safely secured.*

No one involved with the experiment had any contact with the viewers, since they were not in the vicinity of either SAIC or Dr. Lantz's home in Pennsylvania.

- *No one who has knowledge of the specific target or even of whether or not the session was successful should have any contact with the judge until after that task has been completed.*

Dr. Lantz and the individual viewers were the only ones who knew the correct answers, but according to Dr. May, they did not have any contact with the judge during the period of this experiment.

- *No one who has knowledge of the specific target should have access to the response until after the judging has been completed.*

Again, since only the viewers and Dr. Lantz knew the correct target, and since the responses were mailed to SAIC by the viewers before they received the answers, this condition appears to have been met.

- *Targets and decoys used in judging should be selected using a well-tested randomization device.*

This has been standard practice at both SRI and SAIC.

- *Duplicate sets of targets photographs should be used, one during the experiment and one during the judging, so that no cues (like fingerprints) can be inserted onto the target that would help the judge recognize it.*

This was done; Dr. Lantz maintained the set used during the experiment while the set used for judging was kept at SAIC in California.

- *The criterion for stopping an experiment should be defined in advance so that it is not called to a halt when the results just happen to be favorable. Generally, that means specifying the number of trials in advance, but some statistical procedures require other*

*stopping rules. The important point is that the rule be defined in advance in such a way that there is no ambiguity about when to stop.*

In advance it was decided that each viewer would contribute 40 trials, ten under each of four conditions (all combinations of sender/no sender and static/dynamic). All sessions were completed.

- *Reasons, if any, for excluding data must be defined in advance and followed consistently, and should not be dependent on the data. For example, a rule specifying that a trial could be aborted if the viewer felt ill would be legitimate, but only if the trial was aborted before anyone involved in that decision knew the correct target.*

No such reasons were given, nor was there any mention of any sessions being aborted or discarded.

- *Statistical analyses to be used must be planned in advance of collecting the data so that a method most favorable to the data isn't selected post hoc. If multiple methods of analysis are used the corresponding conclusions must recognize that fact.*

The standard rank-order judging had been planned, with results reported separately for each of the four conditions in the experiment for each viewer. Thus, 20 effect sizes were reported, four for each of the five viewers.

## 4.6 WAS ANYTHING LEARNED AT SAIC?

**4.6.1 TARGET SELECTION.** In addition to the question of whether or not psychic functioning is possible, the experiments at SAIC were designed to explore a number of hypotheses. Experiments I and 10 were both designed to see if there is a relationship between the "change in visual entropy" in the targets and the remote viewing performance.

Each of the five senses with which we are familiar is a change detector. Our vision is most readily drawn to something that is moving, and in fact if our eyes are kept completely still, we cease to see at all. Similarly, we hear because of moving air, and our attention is drawn to sudden changes

in sound levels. Other senses behave similarly. Thus, it is reasonable that if there really is a "psychic sense" then it would follow that same pattern.

Experiments 1 and 10 were designed to test whether or not remote viewing performance would be related to a particular type of change in the target material, namely the "change in visual entropy." A target with a high degree of change would be one in which the colors changed considerably throughout the target. A detailed explanation can be found in the SAIC reports of this experiment, or in the article "Shannon Entropy: A Possible Intrinsic Target Property" by May, Spottiswoode and James, in the *Journal of Parapsychology,* December 1994. It was indeed found that there was a correlation between the change in entropy in the target and the remote viewing quality. This result was initially shown in Experiment I and replicated in Experiment 10. A simulation study matching randomly chosen targets to responses showed that this was unlikely to be an artifact of target complexity or other features.

It is worth speculating on what this might mean for determining how psychic functioning works. Physicists are currently grappling with the concept of time, and cannot rule out precognition as being consistent with current understanding. Perhaps it is the case that we do have a psychic sense, much like our other senses, and that it works by scanning the future for possibilities of major change much as our eyes scan the environment for visual change and our ears are responsive to auditory change. That idea is consistent with anecdotal reports of precognition, which are generally concerned with events involving major life change. Laboratory remote viewing may in part work by someone directing the viewer to focus on a particular point in the future, that in which he or she receives the feedback from the experiment. It may also be the case that this same sense can scan the environment in actual time and detect change as well.

Another hypothesis put forth at SAIC was that laboratory remote viewing experiments are most likely to be successful if the pool of potential targets is neither too narrow nor too wide in terms of the number of possible elements in the target. They called this feature the "target-pool bandwidth" and described it as the number of "differentiable cognitive elements." They reasoned that if the possible target set was too small, the viewer would see the entire set and be unable to distinguish that information from the psychic information. If the set was too broad, the viewer would not have any means for editing an extensive imagination.

Combining these two results would indicate that a good target set would contain targets with high change in visual entropy, but that the set would contain a moderately-sized set of possibilities. The set of *100 National Geographic* photographs used in the later days at SRI and at SAIC may have inadvertently displayed just those properties.

**4.6.2 REMOTE STARING.** Experiment 7, described in Appendix 2, provided results very different from the standard remote viewing work. That experiment was designed to test claims made in the Former Soviet Union and by some researchers in the United States, that individuals could influence the physiology of another individual from a remote location. The study was actually two separate replications of the same experiment, and both replications were successful from a traditional statistical perspective. In other words, it appeared that the physiology of one individual was activated when he or she was being watched by someone in a distant room. If these results are indeed sound, then they may substantiate the folklore indicating that people know when they are being observed from behind.

**4.6.3 ENHANCED BINARY COMPUTER GUESSING.** Experiment 2 was also very different from the standard remote viewing experiments, although it was still designed to test anomalous cognition. Three subjects attempted to use a statistical enhancement technique to increase the ability to guess forced choice targets with two choices. This clever computer experiment showed that for one subject, guessing was indeed enhanced from a raw rate of just above chance (51.6% instead of 50%) to an enhanced rate of 76 percent. The method was extremely inefficient, and it is difficult to imagine practical uses for this ability, if indeed it exists.

# 5. EXTERNAL VALIDATION: REPLICATIONS OF OTHER EXPERIMENTS

## 5.1 CONCEPTUAL SIMILARITY: GANZFELD EXPERIMENTS

While remote viewing has been the primary activity at SRI and SAIC, other researchers have used a similar technique to test for anomalous cognition, called the ganzfeld. As noted in the SAIC Final Report of 29 Sept. 1994, the ganzfeld experiments differ from remote viewing in three fundamental ways. First, a "mild altered state is used," second, senders are [usually] used, so that

telepathy is the primary mode, and third, the *receivers* (viewers) do their own judging just after the session, rather than having an independent judge.

The ganzfeld experiments conducted at Psychophysical Research Laboratories (PRL) were already mentioned in Chapter 3.4. Since the time those results were reported, other laboratories have also been conducting ganzfeld experiments. At the 1995 Annual Meeting of the Parapsychological Association, three replications were reported, all published in the peer-reviewed *Proceedings* of the conference.

The ganzfeld experiments differ in the preferred method of analysis as well. Rather than using the sum of the ranks across sessions, a simple count is made of how many first place matches resulted from a series. Four rather than five choices are given, so by chance there should be about 25% of the sessions resulting in first place matches.

## 5.2 GANZFELD RESULTS FROM FOUR LABORATORIES

In publishing the ganzfeld results from PRL, Bem and Honorton (1994) excluded one of the studies from the general analysis for methodological reasons, and found that the remaining studies showed 106 hits out of 329 sessions, for a hit rate of 32.2 percent when 25 percent was expected by chance. The corresponding *p-value* was .002. As mentioned earlier, the hallmark of science is replication. This result has now been replicated by three additional laboratories.

Bierman (1995) reported four series of experiments conducted at the University of Amsterdam. Overall, there were 124 sessions and 46 hits, for a hit rate of 37 percent. The hit rates for the four individual experiments were 34.3 percent, 37.5 percent, 40 percent and 36.1 percent, so the results are consistent across his four experiments.

Morris, Dalton, Delanoy and Watt (1995) reported results of 97 sessions conducted at the University of Edinburgh in which there were 32 successes, for a hit rate of 33 percent. They conducted approximately equal numbers of sessions under each of three conditions. In one condition there was a known sender, and in the other two conditions it was randomly determined at the last minute (and unknown to the receiver) that there would either be a sender or not. Hit rates were 34 percent when there was a known sender and when there was no sender, and 28

percent when there was a sender but the receiver did not know whether or not there would be. They did discover *post hoc* that one experimenter was more successful than the other two at achieving successful sessions, but the result was not beyond what would be expected by chance as a *post hoc* observation.

Broughton and Alexander (1995) reported results from 100 sessions at the Institute for Parapsychology in North Carolina. They too found a similar hit rate, with 33 hits out of 100 sessions, or 33 percent hits.

Results from the original ganzfeld work and these three replications are summarized in Table 3, along with the SRI and SAIC remote viewing results. The effect sizes for the ganzfeld replications are based on Cohen's h, which is similar in type to the effect size used for the remote viewing data. Both effect sizes measure the number of standard deviations the results fall above chance, using the standard deviation for a single session.

TABLE 3: REMOTE VIEWING AND GANZFELD REPLICATIONS

| Laboratory | Sessions | Hit Rate | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Remote Viewing at SRI | 770 | N/A | .209 |
| All Remote Viewing at SAIC | 455 | N/A | .230 |
| PRL, Princeton, NJ | 329 | 32 percent | .167 |
| University of Amsterdam, Netherlands | 124 | 37 percent | .261 |
| University of Edinburgh, Scotland | 97 | 33 percent | .177 |
| Institute for Parapsychology, NC | 100 | 33 percent | .177 |

## 5.3 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT EXTERNAL REPLICATION

The results shown in Table 3 show that remote viewing has been conceptually replicated across a number of laboratories, by various experimenters and in different cultures. This is a robust effect

that, were it not in such an unusual domain, would no longer be questioned by science as a real phenomenon. It is unlikely that methodological problems could account for the remarkable consistency of results shown in Table 3.

## 6. IS REMOTE VIEWING USEFUL?

Even if we were all to agree that anomalous cognition is possible, there remains the question of whether or not it would have any practical use for government purposes. The answer to that question is beyond the scope of this report, but some speculations can be made about how to increase the usefulness.

First, it appears that anomalous cognition is to some extent possible in the general population. None of the ganzfeld experiments used exclusively selected subjects. However, it also appears that certain individuals possess more talent than others, and that it is easier to find those individuals than to train people. It also appears to be the case that certain individuals are better at some tasks than others. For instance, Viewer 372 at SAIC appears to have a facility with describing technical sites.

Second, if remote viewing is to be useful, the end users must be trained in what it can do and what it cannot. Given our current level of understanding, it is rarely 100 percent accurate, and there is no reliable way to learn what is accurate and what is not. The same is probably true of most sources of intelligence data.

Third, what is useful for one purpose may not be useful for another. For instance, suppose a remote viewer could describe the setting in which a hostage is being held. That information may not be any use at all to those unfamiliar with the territory, but could be useful to those familiar with it.

obtained from end user judgments of the accuracy and value of the remote viewing reports were assessed.

This multifaceted evaluation effort led to the following conclusions:

- The conditions under which the remote viewing phenomenon is observed in laboratory settings do not apply in intelligence gathering situations. For example, viewers cannot be provided with feedback and targets may not display the characteristics needed to produce hits.

- The end users indicating that, although some accuracy was observed with regard to broad background characteristics, the remote viewing reports failed to produce the concrete, specific information valued in intelligence gathering.

- The information provided was inconsistent, inaccurate with regard to specifics, and required substantial subjective interpretation.

- In no case had the information provided ever been used to guide intelligence operations. Thus, Remote viewing failed to produce actionable intelligence.

## Conclusions

The foregoing observations provide a compelling argument against continuation of the program within the intelligence community. Even though a statistically significant effect has been observed in the laboratory, it remains unclear whether the existence of a paranormal phenomenon, remote viewing, has been demonstrated. The laboratory studies do not provide evidence regarding the origins or nature of the phenomenon, assuming it exists, nor do they address an important methodological issue of inter-judge reliability.

Further, even if it could be demonstrated unequivocally that a paranormal phenomenon occurs under the conditions present in the laboratory paradigm, these conditions have limited

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear to this author that anomalous cognition is possible and has been demonstrated. This conclusion is not based on belief, but rather on commonly accepted scientific criteria. The phenomenon has been replicated in a number of forms across laboratories and cultures. The various experiments in which it has been observed have been different enough that if some subtle methodological problems can explain the results, then there would have to be a different explanation for each type of experiment, yet the impact would have to be similar across experiments and laboratories. If fraud were responsible, similarly, it would require an equivalent amount of fraud on the part of a large number of experimenters or an even larger number of subjects.

What is not so clear is that we have progressed very far in understanding the mechanism for anomalous cognition. Senders do not appear to be necessary at all; feedback of the correct answer may or may not be necessary. Distance in time and space do not seem to be an impediment. Beyond those conclusions, we know very little.

I believe that it would be wasteful of valuable resources to continue to look for proof. No one who has examined all of the data across laboratories, taken as a collective whole, has been able to suggest methodological or statistical problems to explain the ever-increasing and consistent results to date. Resources should be directed to the pertinent questions about how this ability works. I am confident that the questions are no more elusive than any other questions in science dealing with small to medium sized effects, and that if appropriate resources are targeted to appropriate questions, we can have answers within the next decade.

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# APPENDIX 1

## EFFECT SIZE MEASURE USED WITH RANK ORDER JUDGING

In general, effect sizes measure the number of standard deviation the true population value of interest falls from the value that would be true if chance alone were at work. The standard deviation used is for one subject, trial, etc., rather than being the standard error of the sample statistic used in the hypothesis test.

In rank-order judging, let $R$ be the rank for a single trial. If the number of possible choices is N, then we find:

$$E(R) = (N + 1)/2$$

and

$$Var(R) = \frac{N^2 - 1}{12}$$

Therefore, when N = 5, we find $E(R) = 3$ *and* $Var(R) = 2$. The effect size is therefore:

$$EffectSize = \frac{(3.0 - Average\ Rank)}{/2}$$

# APPENDIX 2

## A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SAIC EXPERIMENTS

## EXPERIMENTS INVOLVING REMOTE VIEWING

There were six experiments involving remote viewing, done for a variety of purposes.

### EXPERIMENT 1: TARGET AND SENDER DEPENDENCIES:

**PURPOSE:** This experiment was designed to test whether or not a sender is necessary for successful remote viewing and whether or not dynamic targets, consisting of short video clips, would result in more successful remote viewing than the standard *National Geographic* photographs used in most of the SRI experiments.

**METHOD:** Five experienced remote viewers participated, three of whom (#s 009, 131 and 372) were included in the experienced group at SRI; their identification numbers were carried over to the SAIC experiments. Each viewer worked from his or her home and faxed the results of the sessions to the principal investigator, Nevin Lantz, located in Pennsylvania. Whether the target was static or dynamic and whether or not there was a sender was randomly determined and unknown to the viewer. Upon receiving the fax of the response, Dr. Lantz mailed the correct answer to the viewer. The original response was sent to SAIC in California, where the results were judged by an analyst blind to the correct target. Standard rank-order judging was used.

Since it is not explicitly stated, I asked Dr. May what measures were taken to make sure the viewer actually mailed the original response to SAIC *before* receiving the correct answer in the mail. He said that the original faxed responses were compared with the responses received by SAIC to make sure they were the same, and they all were.

**RESULTS:** Each viewer contributed ten trials under each of the four possible conditions (sender/no sender and static/dynamic target), for a total of 40 trials per viewer. There was a moderate difference (effect size = .121, $p$ = .08) between the static and dynamic targets, with the traditional *National Geographic* photographs faring better than the dynamic video clips. There was no noticeable difference based on whether or not a sender was involved, supporting the same conclusion reached in the overall analysis of the SRI work. Combined over all conditions and all viewers, the effect size was 0. 124 (p = .04); for the static targets alone it was .248 (exact p = .0073) while for the dynamic targets it was 0.00 (p = .50).

**DISCUSSION:** The SAIC staff speculated that the dynamic targets were not successful because the possibilities were too broad. They chose a new set of dynamic targets to be more similar to the static targets and performed another experiment the following year to compare the static targets with the more similar set of dynamic ones. That experiment is described below (Experiment 10.)

## EXPERIMENT 4: ENHANCING DETECTION OF AC WITH BINARY CODING:

**PURPOSE:** This experiment was designed to see if remote viewing could be used to develop a message-sending capability by focusing on the presence or absence of five specific features of a target. The target set was constructed in packets of four, with possible combinations of the absence (0) or presence (1) of each of the five features chosen to correspond to the numbers 00000, 01110, 10101, and 11011. This is standard practice in information theory when trying to send a two digit number (00, 01, 10 or 11); the remaining three bits are used for "error corrections." Different sets of five features were used for each of ten target packs.

**METHOD:** Five viewers each contributed eight trials, but the same eight targets were used for all five viewers. There was no sender used, and viewers were told that each target would be in a fixed location for one week. They were to spend 15 minutes trying to draw the target, then fax their responses to SAIC in California. The results were blind-judged and the binary features were coded by both the viewers and an independent analyst.

**RESULTS:** The results were unsuccessful in showing any evidence of psychic functioning. Neither standard rank-order judging nor analysis based on the binary guesses showed any promise that this method works to send messages.

**EXPERIMENT 5: AC IN LUCID DREAMS (BASELINE):**

**PURPOSE:** Despite its name, this experiment did not involve lucid dreaming. Instead, it was used to test three novice remote viewers who were to participate in an experiment involving remote viewing while dreaming. This baseline experiment was designed to see if these individuals would be successful at standard laboratory remote viewing.

**METHOD:** For this baseline experiment, each of the three viewers contributed eight trials using a standard protocol common in the SRI era. For each trial, a target was randomly chosen from the set of *100 National Geographic* targets used at SRI and SAIC. The target was placed on a table (so no sender was used) while the viewer, in another room, was asked to provide a description. The response was later blind-judged by comparing it to the target and four decoys, and providing a rank-ordering of the five choices.

**RESULTS:** Of the three novice viewers, one obtained a promising effect size of .265, although the result was not statistically significant due to the small number of trials (8). Individual results were not provided for the other two viewers, but the overall effect size was reported as 0.088 for the three viewers.

**EXPERIMENT 6: AC IN LUCID DREAMS (PILOT):**

**PURPOSE:** A lucid dream is a dream in which one becomes aware that he or she is dreaming, and can control subsequent events in the dream. This ability has apparently been successfully trained by Dr. Stephen LaBerge of the Lucidity Institute. He was the Principal Investigator for this experiment. The experiment was designed to see if remote viewing could be successfully employed while the viewer was having a lucid dream.

**METHOD:** Seven remote viewers were used; four were experienced SAIC remote viewers and three were experienced lucid dreamers from the Lucidity Institute. The latter three were the

novice viewers used in Experiment 5. The experienced SAIC remote viewers were given training in lucid dreaming. The number of trials contributed by each viewer could not be fixed in advance because of the difficulty of attaining the lucid dream state. A total of 21 trials were conducted, with the seven viewers contributing anywhere from one to seven trials each. The report did not mention whether or not the stopping criterion was fixed in advance, but according to Dr. May the experiment was designed to proceed for a fixed time period and to include all sessions attained during that time period.

Unlike with standard well-controlled protocols, the viewers were allowed to take the target material home with them. The targets, selected from the standard *National Geographic pool,* were sealed in opaque envelopes with covert threads to detect possible tampering (there were no indications of such tampering). Viewers were instructed to place the targets at bedside and to attempt a lucid dream in which the envelope was opened and the target viewed. Drawings and descriptions were then to be produced upon awakening.

**RESULTS:** The results were blind-judged using the standard sum of ranks. Since the majority of viewers contributed only one or two trials, analysis by individual viewer would be meaningless. For the 21 trials combined, the effect size was 0.368 ($p = .046$). Information was not provided to differentiate the novice remote viewers from the experienced ones.

### EXPERIMENT 9: ERD AC BEHAVIOR:

**PURPOSE:** The remote viewing in this experiment was conducted in conjunction with measurement of brain waves using an EEG. The purpose of the experiment was to see whether or not EEG activity would change when the target the person was attempting to describe was briefly displayed on a computer monitor in a distant room. Details of the EEG portion will be explained as experiment 8. Here, we summarize the remote viewing part of the study.

**METHOD:** Three experienced remote viewers (#s 009, 372 and 389) participated. Because of the pilot nature of the experiment, the number of trials differed for each viewer based on availability, with viewers 009, 372 and 389 contributing 18, 24 and 28 trials, respectively. Although it is not

good protocol to allow an unspecified number of trials, it does not appear that this problem can explain the results of this experiment.

**RESULTS:** Responses were blind-judged using standard rank-order analysis. The effect sizes for the viewers 009, 372 and 389 were 0.432 ($p$ = .033), 0.354 ($p$ = .042) and 0.177 ($p$ = .175), respectively. The overall effect size was 0.303 ($p$ = 0.006).

## EXPERIMENT 10: ENTROPY II:

**PURPOSE:** This experiment was designed as an improved version of Experiment 1. After the unsuccessful showing for the dynamic targets in Experiment 1, the SAIC team speculated that the "target pool bandwidth" defined as the number of "cognitively differentiable elements" in the target pool might be an important factor. If the possible target material was extremely broad, viewers might have trouble filtering out extraneous noise. If the set of possibilities was too small, as in forced choice experiments, the viewer would see all choices at once and would have trouble filtering out that knowledge. An intermediate range of possibilities, too large to be considered all at once, was predicted to be ideal. The standard *National Geographic* pool seemed to fit that range. For this experiment, a pool of dynamic targets was created with a similar "band-width." In both Experiments (1 and 10) the researchers predicted that remote viewing success would correlate with the change in visual entropy of the target, as explained in Chapter 4.6.1.

**METHOD:** Four of the five viewers from Experiment 1 were used (#s 009, 372, 389 and 518). They each contributed equal numbers of sessions with static and dynamic targets, with the viewers blind to which trials had which type. Senders were not used, and all sessions were conducted at SAIC in California, unlike Experiment I in which the viewers worked at home. Viewer #372 contributed 15 of each type while the others each contributed 10 of each type. Standard rank-order judging was used.

**RESULTS:** Table 4 shows the results for this experiment. Unlike in Experiment 1, the static and dynamic targets produced identical effect sizes, with both types producing very successful results. The combined effect size for all trials is .55, resulting in a z-score of 5.22.

| TABLE 4: RESULTS FOR EXPERIMENT 10 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Static Targets | | | Dynamic Targets | | |
| Viewer | Rank | ES | p | Rank | ES | p |
| 009 | 2.20 | .565 | .037 | 1.70 | .919 | $1.8X10^{-3}$ |
| 372 | 1.87 | .801 | $9.7X10^{-4}$ | 1.93 | .754 | $1.8X10^{-3}$ |
| 389 | 3.10 | -.071 | .589 | 3.0 | .000 | .500 |
| 518 | 1.90 | .778 | $7.2X10^{-3}$ | 2.4 | .424 | .091 |
| Total | 2.22 | .550 | $1.1X10^{-5}$ | 2.22 | .550 | $1.1X10^{-5}$ |

## THE OTHER EXPERIMENTS AT SAIC

There were four additional experiments at SAIC, not involving remote viewing. Two of them (experiments 3 and 8) involved trying to measure brain activity related to psychic functioning and will be described briefly. Experiment 3 used a magnetoenchephalograph (MEG) to attempt to detect anomalous signals in the brain when a remote stimulus was present. Due to the background noise in the brain measurements and the expected strength of the signal, the experimenters realized too late that they would not be able to detect a signal even if it existed. Experiment 8 utilized an EEG to try to detect the interruption of alpha waves when a remote viewing target was briefly displayed on a computer monitor in another room. The area of the brain tested was that corresponding to visual stimuli. No significant change in alpha was seen.

The remaining two experiments were replications of previous work measuring psychic functioning in areas other than remote viewing. They will be described in detail.

## EXPERIMENT 2: AC OF BINARY TARGETS:

**PURPOSE:** This experiment attempted to replicate and enhance random number generator experiments conducted at SRI. In these types of experiments a computer randomly selects one of two choices to be the target, denoted as 0 or 1. The internal workings of the computer then rapidly oscillate between 0 and 1 and the subject pushes a mouse button when he or she thinks the internal choice matches the target choice. This process is repeated over many trials. The computer tabulates the results and the experiment is a success if the subject guesses the correct answer more often than would be expected by chance. The purpose is to see if humans can correctly guess computer-selected binary targets, and hopefully by extension, correctly solve binary choice problems in real situations. If that were to be the case, then real problems could be posed as binary ones (e.g. is the lost child still in this city or not) to narrow down possibilities.

**METHOD:** This SAIC experiment was designed to enhance the accuracy of binary guessing by using a statistical technique called sequential analysis. Rather than just one guess for each decision, the subject continues to guess until the computer ascertains that a decision has been reached. The computer keeps track of the number of times zero and one have each been guessed and announces a decision when one of the choices has clearly won out over the other, or when it is clear that it is essentially an ongoing tie. In the latter case, no decision is recorded. Three subjects participated (#s 007, 083 and 531) in this experiment. Subject #531 had been successful in similar experiments at SRI.

**RESULTS:** Using this method for enhancing the accuracy of the guesses, subject #531, who had been successful in previous similar experiments, was able to achieve 76 correct answers out of 100 tries. This remarkable level of scoring for this type of experiment resulted in an effect size of .520 and a z-score of 5.20. The other two subjects did not differ from chance results, with 44 and 49 correct decisions out of 100 or 101. (One subject accidentally contributed an additional trial.)

Although the result for subject 531 is remarkably successful, it does not represent a very efficient method of obtaining the decision. To reach the 100 decisions required a total of 21,337 guesses, i.e., over 200 guesses for each decision. Of the individual guesses, only 51.6 percent were correct, for an effect size of .032, similar to other forced choice experiments. Due to the large number of guesses, the corresponding z-score was 4.65. Combined over all three subjects, 56 percent of the

applicability and utility for intelligence gathering operations. For example, the nature of the remote viewing targets are vastly dissimilar, as are the specific tasks required of the remote viewers. Most importantly, the information provided by remote viewing is vague and ambiguous, making it difficult, if not impossible, for the technique to yield information of sufficient quality and accuracy of information for actionable intelligence. Thus, we conclude that continued use of remote viewing in intelligence gathering operations is not warranted.

301 decisions were correct and the effect size was 0.123. The combined results were still statistically significant, with $p$ = 0. 017, as shown in Table 1.

## EXPERIMENT 7: REMOTE OBSERVATION:

**PURPOSE:** It is often reported anecdotally that people know when they are being watched. Two experiments were conducted at SAIC to determine whether or not these anecdotes could be supported by a change in physiology when someone is being observed from a distance. The experimental design was essentially the same for the two experiments. This work was a conceptual replication of results reported by researchers in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), the United States and Scotland. The experiments in the FSU were interpreted to mean that the physiology of the recipient was being manipulated by the sender, an effect that if real could have frightening consequences.

**METHOD:** The "observee" was seated in a room with a video camera focused on him or her, and with galvanic skin response measurements being recorded. In a distant room the "observer" attempted to influence the physiology of the observee at randomly spaced time intervals. During those time intervals, an image of the observee appeared on a computer monitor watched by the observer. During "control" periods, the video camera remained focused on the observee but the computer monitor did not display his or her image to the observer. There were 16 "influence" periods randomly interspersed with 16 "control" periods, each of 30 seconds, with blank periods of 0 to 5 seconds inserted to rule out patterns in physiology.

**RESULTS:** To determine whether or not the galvanic skin response of the observees was activated while they were being watched, the response during the control periods was compared with the response during the "influence" periods for each subject. The results were then averaged across subjects. In both experiments, there was greater activity during the periods of being watched than there was during the control periods. The results were statistically significant in each case (p = .036 and .014) and the effect sizes were similar, at 0.39 and 0.49. As preplanned, the results were combined, yielding an effect size of .39 (p = .005). As an interesting *post hoc* observation, it was noted that the effect was substantially stronger when the observer and observee were of opposite sexes than when they were of the same sex.

**DISCUSSION:** This experiment differs from the others conducted at SAIC since it involves interaction between two people rather than one person ascertaining information about the environment or the future. It raises substantially more questions than it answers, since the mechanism for the shift in physiology is unknown. Possibilities range from the idea that the observee was able to know when the computer in the distant room was displaying his or her image, not unlike remote viewing, to the possibility that the observer actually did influence the physiology of the observee. Further experimentation as well as a review of similar past experiments may be able to shed light on this important question.

## Review 2

### Evaluation of Program on "Anomalous Mental Phenomena"

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## INTRODUCTION

Professor Jessica Utts and I were given the task of evaluating the program on "Anomalous Mental Phenomena" carried out at SRI International (formerly the Stanford Research Institute) from 1973 through 1989 and continued at SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation) from 1992 through 1994. We were asked to evaluate this research in terms of its scientific value. We were also asked to comment on its potential utility for intelligence applications.

The investigators use the term "Anomalous Mental Phenomena" to refer to what the parapsychologists label *as psi. Psi* includes both extrasensory perception (called *Anomalous Cognition* by the present investigators) and psychokinesis (called *Anomalous Perturbation* by the present investigators). The experimenters claim that their results support the existence of Anomalous Cognition--especially clairvoyance (information transmission from a target without the intervention of a human sender) and precognition. They found no evidence for the existence of Anomalous Perturbation.

Our evaluation will focus on the 10 experiments conducted at SAIC. These are the most recent in the program as well as the only ones for which we have adequate documentation. The earlier SRI research on remote viewing suffered from methodological inadequacies. Another reason for

concentrating upon this more recent set of experiments is the limited time frame allotted for this evaluation.

I will not ignore entirely the earlier SRI research. I will also consider some of the contemporary research in parapsychology at other laboratories. This is because a proper scientific evaluation of any research program has to place it in the context of the broader scientific community. In addition, some of this contemporary research was subcontracted by the SAIC investigators.

Professor Utts has provided an historical overview of the SRI and SAIC programs as well as descriptions of the experiments under consideration. I will not duplicate what she has written on these topics. Instead, I will focus on her conclusions that:

> *Using the standards applied to any other area of science, it is concluded that psychic functioning has been well established [Utts, Sept 1995, p I]*

> *Arguments that these results could be due to methodological flaws in the experiments are soundly refuted Effects of similar magnitude to those found in government-sponsored research at SRI and SAIC have been replicated at a number of laboratories across the world. Such consistency cannot be readily explained by claims of flaws or fraud* [Utts, Sept 1995, p I]

Because my report will emphasize points of disagreement between Professor Utts and me, I want to state that we agree on many other points. We both agree that the SAIC experiments were free of the methodological weaknesses that plagued the early SRI research. We also agree that the SAIC experiments appear to be free of the more obvious and better known flaws that can invalidate the results of parapsychological investigations. We agree that the effect sizes reported in the SAIC experiments are too large and consistent to be dismissed as statistical flukes.

I also believe that Jessica Utts and I agree on what the next steps should be.

> We disagree on key questions such as:

1. Do these apparently non-chance effects justify concluding that the existence of anomalous cognition has been established?

2. Has the possibility of methodological flaws been completely eliminated?

3. Are the SAIC results consistent with the contemporary findings in other parapsychological laboratories on remote viewing and the ganzfeld phenomenon?

The remainder of this report will try to justify why I believe the answer to these three questions is "no."

## SCIENTIFIC STATUS OF THE PROGRAM

Science is basically a *communal* activity. For any developed field of inquiry, a community of experts exist. This community provides the *disciplinary matrix* which determines what questions are worth asking, which issues are relevant, what variables matter and which can be safely ignored, and the criteria for judging the adequacy of observational data. The community provides checks and balances through the referee system, open criticism, and independent replications. Only those relationships that are reasonably lawful and replicable across independent laboratories become part of the shared scientific store of "knowledge."

An individual investigator or laboratory can contribute to this store. However, by itself, the output of a single investigator or laboratory does not constitute science. No matter how careful and competent the research, the findings of a single laboratory count for nothing unless they can be reliably replicated in other laboratories. This rule is true of ordinary claims. It holds true especially for claims that add something new or novel to the existing database. When an investigator, for example, announces the discovery of a new element, the claim is not accepted until the finding has been successfully replicated by several independent laboratories. Of course, this rule is enforced even more when the claim has revolutionary implications that challenge the fundamental principles underlying most sciences.

## GENERAL SCIENTIFIC HANDICAPS OF THE SAIC PROGRAM

The brief characterization of scientific inquiry in the preceding chapter alerts us to serious problems in trying to assess the scientific status of the SAIC research. The secrecy under which the SRI and SAIC programs was conducted necessarily cut them off from the communal aspects of scientific inquiry. The checks and balances that come from being an open part of the disciplinary matrix were absent. With the exception of the past year or so, none of the reports went through the all-important peer-review system. Worse, promising findings did not have the opportunity of being replicated in other laboratories.

The commendable improvements in protocols, methodology, and data-gathering have not profited from the general shake-down and debugging that comes mainly from other laboratories trying to use the same improvements. Although the research program that started in 1973 continued for over twenty years, the secrecy and other constraints have produced only ten adequate experiments for consideration. Unfortunately, ten experiments—especially from one laboratory (considering the SAIC program as a continuation of the SRI program)—is far too few to establish reliable relationships in almost any area of inquiry. In the traditionally elusive quest for psi, ten experiments from one laboratory promise very little in the way of useful conclusions.

The ten SAIC experiments suffer another handicap in their quest for scientific status. The principal investigator was not free to run the program to maximize scientific payoff. Instead, he had to do experiments and add variables to suit the desires of his sponsors. The result was an attempt to explore too many questions with too few resources. In other words, the scientific inquiry was spread too thin. The 10 experiments were asked to provide too many sorts of information.

For these reasons, even before we get to the details (and remember the devil is usually in the details), the scientific contribution of this set of studies will necessarily be limited.

## PARAPSYCHOLOGY'S STATUS AS A SCIENCE

Parapsychology began its quest for scientific status in the mid-1800s. At that time it was known as Psychical research. The Society for Psychical Research was founded in London in 1882. Since that time, many investigators--including at least four Nobel laureates--have tried to establish parapsychology as a legitimate science. Beginning in the early 1930s, J.B. Rhine initiated an impressive program to distance parapsychology from its tainted beginnings in spiritualistic seances and turn it into an experimental science. He pulled together various ideas of his predecessors in an attempt to make the study of ESP and PK a rigorous discipline based on careful controls and statistical analysis.

His first major publication caught the attention of the scientific community. Many were impressed with this display of a huge database, gathered under controlled conditions, and analyzed with the most modem statistical tools. Critics quickly attacked the statistical basis of the research. However, Burton Camp, the president of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, came to the parapsychologists' defense in 1937. He issued a statement that if the critics were going to fault parapsychological research they could not do so on statistical grounds. The critics then turned their attention to methodological weaknesses. Here they had more success.

What really turned scientists against parapsychological claims, however, was the fact that several scientists failed to replicate Rhine's results. This problem of replicability has plagued parapsychology ever since. The few, but well-publicized, cheating scandals that were uncovered also worked against parapsychology's acceptance into the general scientific community.

Parapsychology shares with other sciences a number of features. The database comes from experiments using controlled procedures, double-blind techniques where applicable, the latest and most sophisticated apparatus, and sophisticated statistical analysis. In addition, the findings are reported at annual meetings and in refereed journals.

Unfortunately, as I have pointed out elsewhere, parapsychology has other characteristics that make its status as a normal science problematic. Here I will list only a few. These are worth mentioning because they impinge upon the assessment of the scientific status of the SAIC program. Probably the most frequently discussed problem is the issue of replicability. Both critics

and parapsychologists have agreed that the lack of consistently replicable results has been a major reason for parapsychology's failure to achieve acceptance by the scientific establishment.

Some parapsychologists have urged their colleagues to refrain from demanding such acceptance until they can put examples of replicable experiments before the scientific community. The late parapsychologist J.G.Pratt went further and argued that parapsychology would never develop a replicable experiment. He argued that psi was real but would forever elude deliberate control. More recently, the late Honorton claimed that the ganzfeld experiments had, indeed, achieved the status of a replicable paradigm. The title of the landmark paper in the January 1994 issue of the *Psychological Bulletin* by Bem and Honorton is "Does psi exist? Replicable evidence for an anomalous process of information transfer." In her position paper "Replication and meta-analysis in parapsychology" *(Statistical Science, 1991, 6,* pp. 363-403), Jessica Utts reviews the evidence from meat-analyses of parapsychological research to argue that replication has been demonstrated and "that the overall evidence indicates that there is an anomalous effect in need of explanation."

In evaluating the SAIC research, Utts points to the consistency of effect sizes produced by the expert viewers across experiments as well as the apparent consistency of average effect sizes of the SRI and SAIC experiments with those from other parapsychological laboratories. These consistencies in effect sizes across experiments and laboratories, in her opinion, justify the claim that anomalous mental phenomena can be reliably replicated with appropriately designed experiments. This is an important breakthrough for parapsychology, if it is true. However, to anticipate some of my later commentary, I wish to emphasize that simply replicating effect size is not the same thing as showing the repeated occurrence of anomalous mental phenomena. Effect size is nothing more than a standardized difference between an observed and an expected outcome hypothesized on the basis of an idealized probability model. An indefinite number of factors can cause departures from the idealized probability model. An investigator needs to go well beyond the mere demonstration that effect sizes are the same before he/she can legitimately claim that they are caused by the same underlying phenomenon.

In my opinion, a more serious challenge to parapsychology's quest for scientific status is the lack of cumulativeness in its database. Only parapsychology, among the fields of inquiry claiming scientific status, lacks a cumulative database. Physics has changed dramatically since Newton conducted his famous experiment using prisms to show that white light contained all the colors of

the spectrum. Yet, Newton's experiment is still valid and still yields the same results. Psychology has changed its ideas about the nature of memory since Ebbinghaus conducted his famous experiments on the curve of forgetting in the 1880s. We believe that memory is more dynamic and complicated than can be captured by Ebbinghaus' ideas about a passive, rote memory system. Nevertheless, his findings still can be replicated and they form an important part of our database on memory.

Parapsychology, unlike the other sciences, has a shifting database. Experimental data that one generation puts forth as rock-solid evidence for psi is discarded by later generations in favor of new data. When the Society for Psychical Research was founded in 1882, its first president Henry Sidgwick, pointed to the experiments with the Creery sisters as the evidence that should convince even the most hardened skeptic of the reality of psi. Soon, he and the other members of the Society argued that the data from Smith-Blackbum experiments provided the fraud-proof case for the reality of telepathy. The next generation of Psychical researchers, however, cast aside these cases as defective and we no longer hear about them. Instead, they turned to new data to argue their case.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the results of Rhine's card guessing experiments were offered as the solid evidence for the reality of psi. The next generation dropped Rhine's data as being flawed and difficult to replicate and it hailed the Soal-Goldney experiments as the replicable and rock-solid basis for the existence of telepathy. Next came the Sheep-Goat experiments. Today, the Rhine data, the Sheep-Goats experiments, and the Soal-Goldney experiments no longer are used to argue the case for psi. Contemporary parapsychologists, instead, point to the ganzfeld experiments, the random-number generator experiments, and--with the declassifying of the SAIC experiments--the remote viewing experiments as their basis for insisting that psi exists.

Professor Utts uses the ganzfeld data and the SAIC remote viewing results to assert that the existence of anomalous cognition has been proven. She does not completely discard earlier data. She cites meat-analyses of some of the earlier parapsychology experiments. Still, the cumulative database for anomalous mental phenomena does not exist. Most of the data accumulated by previous investigators has been discarded. In most cases the data have been discarded for good reasons. They were subsequently discovered to be seriously flawed in one or more ways that was

not recognized by the original investigators. Yet, at the time they were part of the database, the parapsychologists were certain that they offered incontestable evidence for the reality of psi.

How does this discussion relate to our present concerns with the scientific status of the SAIC program? This consideration of the shifting database of parapsychology offers a cautionary note to the use of contemporary research on the ganzfeld and remote viewing as solid evidence for anomalous mental phenomena. More than a century of parapsychological research teaches us that each generation of investigators was sure that it had found the 'Holy Grail'--the indisputable evidence for psychic functioning. Each subsequent generation has abandoned their predecessors' evidence as defective in one way or another. Instead, the new generation had its own version of the holy grail.

Today, the parapsychologists offer us the ganzfeld experiments and, along with Jessica Utts, will presumably will include the SAIC remote viewing experiments as today's reasons for concluding that anomalous cognition has been demonstrated. Maybe this generation is correct. Maybe, this time the "indisputable" evidence will remain indisputable for subsequent generations. However, it is too soon to tell. Only history will reveal the answer. As E.G.Boring once wrote, when writing about the Soal-Goldney experiments, you cannot hurry history.

Meanwhile, as I will point out later in this report, there are hints and suggestions that history may repeat itself Where Utts sees consistency and incontestable proof, I see inconsistency and hints that all is not as rock-solid as she implies.

I can list other reasons to suggest that parapsychology's status as a science is shaky, at best. Some of these reasons will emerge as I discuss specific aspects of the SAIC results and their relation to other contemporary parapsychological research.

## THE CLAIM THAT ANOMALOUS COGNITION EXISTS

Professor Utts concludes "that psychic functioning has been well established." She bases this conclusion on three other claims: 1) the statistical results of the SAIC and other parapsychological experiments "are far beyond what is expected by chance," 2) "arguments that these results could

# Chapter One: Background and History

In their continuing quest to improve effectiveness, many organizations have sought techniques that might be used to enhance performance. For the most part, the candidate techniques come from rather traditional lines of inquiry stressing interventions such as selection, training, and performance appraisal. However, some other, more controversial performance enhancement techniques have also been suggested. These techniques range from implicit learning and mental rehearsal to the enhancement of paranormal abilities.

In the mid-1980s, at the request of the Army Research Institute, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences established a blue ribbon panel charged with evaluating the evidence bearing on the effectiveness of a wide variety of techniques for enhancing human performance. This review was conducted under the overall direction of David A. Goslin, then Executive Director of the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE), and now President of the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The review panel's report, *Enhancing Human Performance: Issues, Theories, and Techniques,* was published by the National Academy Press in 1988 and summarized by Swets and Bjork (1990). They noted that although the panel found some support for certain alternative performance enhancement techniques—for example, guided imagery—little or no support was found for the usefulness of many other techniques, such as learning during sleep and remote viewing.

Although the findings of the National Research Council (NRC) were predominantly negative with regard to a range of paranormal phenomena, work on remote viewing has continued under the auspices of various government programs. Since 1986, perhaps 50 to 100 additional studies of remote viewing have been conducted. At least some of these studies represent

be due to methodological flaws are soundly refuted"; and 3) "Effects of similar magnitude to those found in government-sponsored research at SRI and SAIC have been replicated at a number of laboratories across the world."

Later, in this report, I will raise questions about her major conclusion and the three supporting claims. In this chapter, I want to unpack just what these claims entail. I will start with the statistical findings. Parapsychological is unique among the sciences in relying solely on significant departures from a chance baseline to establish the presence of its alleged phenomenon. In the other sciences the defining phenomena can be reliably observed and do not require indirect statistical measures to justify their existence. Indeed, each branch of science began with phenomena that could be observed directly. Gilbert began the study of magnetism by systematically studying a phenomenon that had been observed and was known to the ancients as well as his contemporaries. Modern physics began by becoming more systematic about moving objects and falling bodies. Psychology became a systematic science by looking for lawful relationships among sensory discriminations. Another starting point was the discovery of lawful relationships in the remembering and forgetting of verbal materials. Note that in none of these cases was the existence of the defining phenomena in question. No one required statistical tests and effect sizes to decide if magnetism was present or if a body had fallen. Psychophysicists did not need to reject a null hypothesis to decide if sensory processes were operating and memory researchers did not have to rely on reaching accepted levels of significance to know if recall or forgetting had occurred.

Each of the major sciences began with phenomena whose presence was not in question. The existence of the primary phenomena was never in question. Each science began by finding systematic *relationships among variations* in the magnitudes of attributes of the central phenomena and the attributes of independent variables such as time, location, etc. The questions for the investigation of memory had to do with how best to describe the forgetting curve and what factors affected its parameters. No statistical tests or determination of effect sizes were required to decide if, in fact, forgetting was or was not present on any particular occasion.

Only parapsychology claims to be a science on the basis of phenomena (or a phenomenon) whose presence can be detected only by rejecting a null hypothesis. To be fair, parapsychologists also talk about doing process research where the emphasis is on finding systematic relationships

between attributes of psi and variations in some independent variable. One conclusion from the SRI/SAIC project, for example, is that there is no relationship between the distance of the target from the viewer and the magnitude of the effect size for anomalous cognition. However, it is still the case that the effect size, and even the question of whether anomalous cognition was present in any experiment, is still a matter of deciding if a departure from a chance base line is non--accidental.

At this point I think it is worth emphasizing that the use of statistical inference to draw conclusions about the null hypothesis assumes that the underlying probability model adequately represents the distributions and variations in the real world situation. The underlying probability model is an *idealization* of the empirical situation for which it is being used. Whether or not the model is appropriate for any given application is an empirical matter and the adequacy of the model has to be justified for each new application. Empirical studies have shown that statistical models fit real world situations only approximately. The tails of real-world distributions, for example, almost always contain more cases than the standard statistics based on the normal curve assume. These departures from the idealized model do not have much practical import in many typical statistical applications because the statistical tests are *robust.* That is, the departures of the actual situation from the assumed probability model typically do not distort the outcome of the statistical test.

However, when statistical tests are used in situations beyond their ordinary application, they can result in rejections of the null hypothesis for reasons other than a presumed departure from the expected chance value. Parapsychologists often complain that their results fail to replicate because of inadequate power. However, because the underlying probability models are only approximations, *too much power* can lead to rejections of the null hypothesis simply because the real world and the idealized statistical model are not exact matches. This discussion emphasizes that significant findings can arise for many reasons--including the simple fact that statistical inference is based on idealized models that mirror the real world only approximately.

I agree with Jessica Utts that the effect sizes reported in the SAIC experiments and in the recent ganzfeld studies probably cannot be dismissed as due to chance. Nor do they appear to be accounted for by multiple testing, file-drawer distortions, inappropriate statistical testing or other misuse of statistical inference. I do not rule out the possibility that some of this apparent departure

from the null hypothesis might simply reflect the failure of the underlying model to be a truly adequate model of the experimental situation. However, I am willing to assume that the effect sizes represent true effects beyond inadequacies in the underlying model. Statistical effects, by themselves, do not justify claiming that anomalous cognition has been demonstrated--or, for that matter, that an anomaly of any kind has occurred.

So, I accept Professor Utts' assertion that the statistical results of the SAIC and other parapsychological experiments "are far beyond what is expected by chance." Parapsychologists, of course, realize that the truth of this claim does not constitute proof of anomalous cognition. Numerous factors can produce significant statistical results. Operationally, the presence of anomalous cognition is detected by the elimination of all other possibilities. This reliance on a *negative definition of its central phenomenon* is another liability that parapsychology brings with its attempt to become a recognized science. Essentially, anomalous cognition is claimed to be present whenever statistically significant departures from the null hypothesis are observed under conditions that preclude the operation of all mundane causes of these departures. As Boring once observed, every success in parapsychological research is a failure. By this he meant that when the investigator or the critics succeed in finding a scientifically acceptable explanation for the significant effect the claim for ESP or anomalous cognition has failed.

Having accepted the existence of non-chance effects, the focus now is upon whether these effects have normal causes. Since the beginning of Psychical research, each claim that psychic functioning had been demonstrated was countered by critics who suggested other reasons for the observed effects, Typical alternatives that have been suggested to account for the effects have been fraud, statistical errors, and methodological artifacts. In the present discussion I am not considering fraud or statistical errors. This leaves only methodological oversight as the source for a plausible alternative to psychic functioning. Utts has concluded that "arguments that these results could be due to methodological flaws are soundly refuted." If she is correct, then I would have to agree with her bottom line that "psychic functioning has been well established."

Obviously I do not agree that all possibilities for alternative explanations of the non-chance results have been eliminated. The SAIC experiments are well-designed and the investigators have taken pains to eliminate the known weaknesses in previous parapsychological research. In addition, I cannot provide suitable candidates for what flaws, if any, might be present. Just the same, it is

impossible in principle to say that any particular experiment or experimental series is completely free from possible flaws. An experimenter cannot control for every possibility--especially for potential flaws that have not yet been discovered.

At this point, a parapsychologist might protest that such "in principle" arguments can always be raised against any findings, no matter how well conceived was the study from which they emerged. Such a response is understandable, but I believe my caution is reasonable in this particular case. Historically, many cases of evidence for psi were proffered on the grounds that they came from experiments of impeccable methodological design. Only subsequently, sometimes by fortunate accident, did the possibility of a serious flaw or alternative explanation of the results become available. The founders of the Society for Psychical Research believed that the Smith--Blackburn experiments afforded no alternative to the conclusion that telepathy was involved. They could conceive of no mundane explanation. Then Blackburn confessed and explained in detail just how he and Smith had tricked the investigators.

The critics became suspicious of the Soal-Goldney findings not only because the results were too good, but also because Soal lost the original records under suspicious circumstances. Hansel, Scott, and Price each generated elaborate scenarios to explain how Soal might have cheated. Hansel and Scott reported finding peculiar patterns in the data. The scenarios, for accounting for these data, however, were extremely complicated and required the collusion of several individuals--some of whom were prominent statesmen and academics. The discovery of how Soal actually had cheated was made by the parapsychologist Betty Markwick. The finding came about through fortuitous circumstances. The method of cheating turned out to involve only one person and employed an ingenious, but simple, method that none of the critics had anticipated.

During the first four years of the original ganzfeld-psi experiments, the investigators asserted that their findings demonstrated psi because the experimental design precluded any normal alternative. Only after I and a couple of parapsychologists independently pointed out how the use of a single set of targets could provide a mundane alternative to psychic communication did the ganzfeld experimenters realize the existence of this flaw. After careful and lengthy scrutiny of the ganzfeld database, I was able to generate a lengthy list of potential flaws.

Honorton and his colleagues devised the autoganzfeld experiments. These experiments were deliberately designed to preclude the flaws that I and others had eventually discovered in the original ganzfeld database. When the statistically significant results emerged from these latter experiments, they were proclaimed to be proof of anomalous communication because all alternative mundane explanations had been eliminated. When I was first confronted with these findings, I had to admit that the investigators had eliminated all but one of the flaws that I had listed for the original database. For some reason, Honorton and his colleagues did not seem to consider seriously the necessity of insuring that their randomization procedures were optimal. However, putting this one oversight aside, I could find no obvious loopholes in the experiments as reported.

When I was asked to comment on the paper that Daryl Bem and Charles Honorton wrote for the January 1994 issue of the *Psychological Bulletin, I* was able to get much of the raw data from Professor Bem. My analyses of that data revealed strong patterns that, to me, pointed to an artifact of some sort. One pattern, for example, was the finding that all the significant hitting above chance occurred only on the second or later occurrence of a target. All the first occurrences of a target yielded results consistent with chance. Although this was a post hoc finding, it was not the result of a fishing expedition. I deliberately looked for such a pattern as an indirect way of checking for the adequacy of the randomization procedures. The pattern was quite strong and persisted in every breakdown of the data that I tried--by separate investigator, by target type, by individual experiment, etc. The existence of this pattern by itself does not prove it is the result of an artifact. As expected, Professor Bem seized upon it as another peculiarity of psi. Subsequent to finding this pattern, I have learned about many other weaknesses in this experiment which could have compromised the results. Robert Morris and his colleagues at the University of Edinburgh took these flaws as well as some additional ones that they uncovered, into account when they designed the ganzfeld replication experiments.

The point of this discussion is that it takes some time before we fully recognize the potential flaws in a newly designed experimental protocol. In some cases, the discovery of a serious flaw is the result of a fortuitous occurrence. In other cases, the uncovering of flaws came about only after the new protocol had been used for a while. Every new experimental design, as is the case for every new computer program, requires a shakedown period and debugging. The problems with any new

method or design are not always apparent at first. Obvious flaws may be eliminated only to be replaced by more subtle ones.

How does this apply to the SAIC experiments? These experiments were designed to eliminate the obvious flaws of the previous remote viewing experiments at SRI. Inspection of the protocol indicates that they succeeded in this respect. The new design and methodology, however, has not had a chance to be used in other laboratories or to be properly debugged. Many of the features that could be considered an asset also have possible down sides. I will return to this later in the report when I discuss the use of the same viewers and the same judge across the different experiments. For now, I just want to suggest some general grounds for caution in accepting the claim that all possible methodological flaws have been eliminated.

The third warrant for Jessica Utts' conclusion that psi has been proven is that "Effects of similar magnitude to those found in government-sponsored research at SRI and SAIC have been replicated at a number of laboratories across the world." I will discuss this matter below. For now, I will point out that effects of similar magnitude can occur for several different reasons. Worse, the average effect size from different parapsychological research programs is typically a meaningless composite of arbitrary units. As such, these averages do not represent meaningful parameters in the real world. For example, Honorton claimed that the autoganzfeld experiments replicated the original ganzfeld experiments because the average effect size for both databases was approximately identical. This apparent similarity in average effect size is meaningless for many reasons. For one thing, the similarity in size depends upon which of many possible averages one considers. In the case under consideration the average effect size was obtained by adding up all the hits and trials for the 28 studies in the database. One experimenter contributed almost half to this total. Others contributed in greatly unequal numbers. The average will differ- if each experimenter's contribution is given equal weight.

In addition, the heterogeneity of effect sizes among separate investigators is huge. All the effect sizes, for example, of one the investigators were negative. Another investigator contributed mostly moderately large effect sizes. If the first investigator had contributed more trials to the total, then the average would obviously have been lower. Similar problems exist for the average from the autoganzfeld experiments. In these latter experiments, the static targets--which most closely resembled the overwhelming majority of targets in the original database--yielded an effect

size of zero. The dynamic targets yielded a highly significant and moderate effect size. Is the correct average effect size for these experiments based on a composite of the results of the static and dynamic targets or should it be based only the dynamic targets?

## THE SAIC PROGRAM

As I have indicated, the SAIC experiments are an improvement on both the preceding SRI experiments as well as previous parapsychological investigations. The investigators seem to have taken pains to insure that randomization of targets for presentation and for judging was done properly. They have eliminated the major flaw in original SRI remote viewing experiments of non-independence in trials for a given viewer. Some of the other features can be considered as improvements but also as possible problems. in this category I would list the use of the same experienced viewers in many experiments and the use of the same target set across experiments. The major limitations that I see in these studies derive from their newness and their having been conducted in secrecy. The newness simply means that we have not had sufficient time to debug and to grasp fully both the strengths and weaknesses of this protocol. The secrecy aggravated this limitation by preventing other investigators from reviewing and criticizing the experiments from the beginning, and by making it impossible for independent laboratories to replicate the findings.'

The fact that these experiments were conducted in the same laboratory, with the same basic protocol, using the same viewers across experiments, the same targets across experiments, and the same investigators aggravates, rather than alleviates, the problem of independent replication. If subtle, as-yet-undetected bias and flaws exist is the protocol, the very consistency of elements such as targets, viewers, investigators, and procedures across experiments enhances the possibility that these flaws will be compounded.

Making matters even worse is the use of the same judge across all experiments. The judging of viewer responses is a critical factor in free-response remote viewing experiments. Ed May, the principle investigator, as I understand it, has been the sole judge in all the free response experiments. May's rationale for this unusual procedure was that he is familiar with the response styles of the individual viewers. If a viewer, for example, talks about bridges, May—from his familiarity with this viewer—might realize that this viewer uses bridges to refer to any object that

is on water. He could then interpret the response accordingly to make the appropriate match to a target. The SAIC experiments did benefit from the input of a distinguished oversight committee. But this still falls far short of what could have taken place in an open forum. Whatever merit this rationale has, it results in a methodological feature that violates some key principles of scientific credibility. One might argue that the judge, for example, should be blind not only about the correct target but also about who the viewer is. More important, the scientific community at large will be reluctant to accept evidence that depends upon the ability of one specific individual. In this regard, the reliance on the same judge for all free-response experiments is like the experimenter effect. To the extent that the results depend upon a particular investigator the question of scientific objectivity arises. Scientific proof depends upon the ability to generate evidence that, in principle, any serious and competent investigator—regardless of his or her personality—can observe.

The use of the same judge across experiments further compounds the problem of non-independence of the experiments. Here, both Professor Utts and I agree. We believe it is important that the remote viewing results be obtainable with different judges. Again, the concern here is that the various factors that are similar across experiments, count against their separate findings as independent evidence for anomalous cognition.

## HAS ANOMALOUS COGNITION BEEN PROVEN?

Obviously, I do not believe that the contemporary findings of parapsychology, including those from the SRI/SAIC program, justify concluding that anomalous mental phenomena have been proven. Professor Utts and some parapsychologists believe otherwise. I admit that the latest findings should make them optimistic. The case for psychic functioning seems better than it ever has been. The contemporary findings along with the output of the SRI/SAIC program do seem to indicate that something beyond odd statistical hiccups is taking place. I also have to admit that I do not have a ready explanation for these observed effects. Inexplicable statistical departures from chance, however, are a far cry from compelling evidence for anomalous cognition.

So what would be compelling evidence for the reality of anomalous cognition? Let's assume that the experimental results from the SAIC remote viewing experiments continue to hold up. Further

assume that along with continued statistical significance no flaws or mundane alternative possibilities come to light. We would then want to ensure that similar results will occur with new viewers, new target pools, and several independent judges. Finally, to satisfy the normal standards of science, we would need to have the findings successfully replicated in independent laboratories by other parapsychologists as well as non-parapsychologists.

If the parapsychologists could achieve this state of affairs, we are faced with a possible anomaly, but not necessarily anomalous cognition. As the parapsychologist John Palmer has recognized, parapsychologists will have to go beyond demonstrating the presence of a statistical anomaly before they can claim the presence of psychic functioning. This is because, among other things, the existence of a statistical anomaly is defined negatively. Something is occurring for which we have no obvious or ready explanation. This something may or may not turn out to be paranormal, According to Palmer, parapsychologists will have to devise *a positive theory of the paranormal* before they will be in a position to claim that the observed anomalies indicate paranormal functioning.

Without such a positive theory, we have no way of specifying the boundary conditions for anomalous mental phenomena. Without such a theory we have no way of specifying when psi is present and when it is absent. Because psi or anomalous cognition is currently detected only by departures from a null hypothesis all kinds of problems beset the quest for the claim and pursuit of psychic functioning. For example, the *decline effect,* which was investigated in one of the SAIC experiments, was once used as an important sign for the presence of psi. J.B.Rhine discovered this effect not only in some of his data but in his re-analyses of data collected by earlier investigators. He attached great importance to his effect because it existed in data whose investigators neither knew of its existence nor had they been seeking it. In addition, the decline effect helped Rhine to explain how seemingly null results really contained evidence for psi. This is because the decline effect often showed up as an excess of hitting in the early half of the experiment and as a deficit of hitting in the second half of the experiment. These two halves, when pooled together over the entire experiment, yielded an overall hit rate consistent with chance.

Although Rhine and other parapsychologists attached great importance to the decline effect as a reliable and often hidden sign of the presence of psychic functioning, the reliance on this indicator unwittingly emphasizes serious problems in the parapsychologist's quest. As the SAIC report on

binary coding states, the decline effect is claimed for a bewildering variety of possibilities. Some investigators have found a decline effect going from the first quarter to the last quarter of each separate score sheet in their experiment. Other investigators have reported a decline effect as a decrease in hit rate from the first half to the second half of the total experiment. Still others find a decline effect across separate experiments. Indeed, almost any variation where the direction is from a higher hit rate to a lower hit rate has been offered as evidence for a decline effect. To confuse matters further, some investigators have claimed finding evidence for an *incline effect*.

If the decline effect is a token for the presence of psi, what should one conclude when the data, as was the case in the SAIC experiment on binary coding, show a significant departure from the null hypothesis *but no decline effect ?* We know what the parapsychologist's conclude. As long as they get a significant effect, they do not interpret the absence of the decline effect as the absence of psychic functioning. This state of affairs holds as well for several other effects that have been put forth as tokens or signs of anomalous mental functioning. Several such signs are listed in the *Handbook of parapsychology* [1977, B.B. Wolman, Editor].

Typically, such signs are sought when the attempt to reject the ordinary null hypothesis *fails*. *Displacement effects* are frequently invoked. When his attempts to replicate Rhine's results failed, Soal was persuaded to re-analyze his data in terms of displacement effects. His retrospective analysis uncovered two subjects whose guesses significantly correlated with the target one or two places ahead of the intended target. In his subsequent experiments with these two subjects, one kept hitting on the symbol that came after the intended target while the other produced significant outcomes only when her guesses were matched against the symbol that occurred just before the intended target. Negative hitting, increased variability, and other types of departures from the underlying theoretical probability model have all been used as hidden signs of the presence of psychic functioning.

What makes this search for hidden tokens of psi problematic is lack of constraints. Any time the original null hypothesis cannot be rejected, the eager investigator can search through the data for one or more these markers. When one is found, the investigator has not hesitated in offering this as proof of the presence of psi. However, if the null hypothesis is rejected and none of these hidden signs of psi can be found in the data, the investigator still claims the presence of psi. This creates the scientifically questionable situation where any significant departure from a probability

significant attempts to address the methodological problems noted in the review conducted by the NRC panel.

At the request of Congress, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is considering assuming responsibility for this the remote viewing program. As part of its decision-making process, the CIA was asked to evaluate the research conducted since the NRC report. This evaluation was intended to determine: (a) whether this research has any long-term practical value for the intelligence community, and (b) if it does, what changes should be made in methods and approach to enhance the value of remote viewing research. To achieve these goals, the CIA contracted with the American Institutes for Research to supervise and conduct the evaluation. This report contains the results of our evaluation.

Before presenting our results, we begin by presenting a brief overview of the remote viewing phenomenon and a short history of the applied program that involves remote viewing.

## Remote Viewing

Although parapsychological research has a long history, studies of "remote viewing"—also referred to as a form of "anomalous cognition"—as a unique manifestation of psychic functioning began in the 1970s. In its simplest form, a typical remote viewing study during this early period of investigation consisted of the following: A person, referred to as a "beacon" or "sender," travels to a series of remote sites. The remote viewer, a person who putatively has the parapsychological ability, is asked to describe the locations of the beacon. Typically, these location descriptions include drawings and a verbal description of the location. Subsequently, a judge evaluates this description by rank ordering the set of locations against the descriptions. If the judge finds that the viewer's description most closely matched the actual location of the sender, a hit is said to have occurred. If hits occur more often than chance, or if the assigned ranks are more accurate than a random assignment, one might argue that a psychic phenomenon has been observed: the viewer has described a location not visited during the session. This phenomenon has been studied by various investigators throughout the intervening period, using several variants of this basic paradigm.

model is used as proof of psi but the absence of these departures does not count as evidence against the presence of psi.

So, acceptable evidence for the presence of anomalous cognition must be based on a positive theory that tells us when psi should and *should not* be present. Until we have such a theory, the claim that anomalous cognition has been demonstrated is empty. Without such a theory, we might just as well argue that what has been demonstrated is a set of *effects—each one of which be the result of an entirely different cause.*

Professor Utts implicitly acknowledges some of the preceding argument by using consistency of findings with other laboratories as evidence that anomalous cognition has been demonstrated. I have already discussed why the apparent consistency in average effect size across experiments cannot be used as an argument for consistency of phenomena across these experiments. To be fair, parapsychologists who argue consistency of phenomena across experiments often go beyond simply pointing to consistency in effect sizes.

One example is the claim that certain personality correlates replicate across experiments. May and his colleagues correctly point out, however, that these correlations tend to be low and inconsistent. Recently, parapsychologists have claimed that extroversion correlates positively with successful performance on anomalous cognition tasks. This was especially claimed to be true of the ganzfeld experiments. However, the apparently successful replication of the autoganzfeld experiments by the Edinburgh group (under subcontract to the SAIC program) found that the introverts, if anything, scored higher than the extroverts.

The autoganzfeld experiments produced significant effects only for the dynamic targets. The static targets produced zero effect size. Yet the bulk of the targets in the original ganzfeld database were static and they produced an effect size that was significantly greater than the zero effect size of the autoganzfeld experiments (I was able to demonstrate that there was adequate power to detect an effect size of the appropriate magnitude for the static targets in the autoganzfeld experiments). Further indication of inconsistency is the SAIC experiment which found that the only the static targets produced a significant effect size, whereas the dynamic targets yielded a zero effect size. May and his colleagues speculated that the failure of the dynamic targets was due to a 'bandwidth' that was too wide. When they apparently narrowed the bandwidth of the dynamic

targets in a second experiment, both dynamic and static targets did equally well. It is unclear whether this should be taken as evidence for consistency or inconsistency. Note that the hypothesis and claim for the autoganzfeld experiments is that dynamic targets should be significantly better than static ones. As far as I can tell the original dynamic targets of the ganzfeld experiments are consistent with an unlimited bandwidth.

Other important inconsistencies exist among the contemporary databases. *The raison d'etre* for the ganzfeld experiments is the belief among some parapsychologists that an altered state facilitates picking up the psi signal because it lowers the noise-to-signal ratio from external sensory input. The touchstone of this protocol is the creation of an altered state in the receiver. This contrasts sharply with the remote viewing experiments in which the viewer is always in a normal state. More important is that the ganzfeld researchers believe that they get best results when each subject serves as his/her own judge. Those experiments in the ganzfeld database that employed both external judges and subjects as their own judges found that their results were more successful using subjects as their own judges. The reverse is true in the remote viewing experiments. The remote viewer experimenters believe that external judges provide much better hit rates than viewer-judges. This difference is even more extreme in the SAIC remote viewing where a single judge was used for all experiments. This judge, who was also the principal investigator, believed that he could achieve best results if he did the judging because of his familiarity with the response styles of the individual viewers.

So even if the ganzfeld and the SAIC remote viewing experiments have achieved significant effects and average effect sizes of approximately the same magnitude, there is no compelling reason to assume they are dealing with the same phenomena or phenomenon. To make such a claim entails showing that the alleged effect shows the same pattern of relationships in each protocol. Almost certainly, a positive theory of anomalous mental phenomena that predicts lawful relationships of a recognizable type will be necessary before a serious claim can be made that the same phenomenon is present across different research laboratories and experiments. Such a positive theory will be necessary also to tell us when we are and when we are not in the presence of this alleged anomalous cognition.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED?

Professor Utts and many parapsychologists argue that they have produced evidence of an anomaly that requires explanation. They assert that the statistical effects they have documented cannot be accounted for in terms of normal scientific principles or methodological artifact. After reviewing the results from the SAIC experiments in the context of other contemporary parapsychological research, Utts is confident that more than an anomaly has been demonstrated. She believes the evidence suffices to conclude that the anomaly establishes the existence of psychic functioning.

This evidence for anomalous cognition, according to Utts and the parapsychologists, meets the standards employed by the other sciences. By this, I think Professor Utts means that in many areas of scientific inquiry the decision that a real effect has occurred is based on rules of statistical inference. Only if the null hypothesis of no difference between two or more treatments is rejected can the investigator claim that the differences are real in the sense that they are greater than might be expected on the basis of some baseline variability. According to this standard, it seems that the SAIC experiments as well as the recent ganzfeld experiments have yielded effects that cannot be dismissed as the result of normal variability.

While the rejection of the null hypothesis is typically a *necessary* step for claiming that an hypothesized effect or relationship has occurred, it is never *sufficient.* Indeed, because the underlying probability model is only an approximation, everyone realizes that the null hypothesis is rarely, if ever, strictly true. In practice, the investigator hopes that the statistical test is sufficiently *robust* that it will reject the null hypothesis only for meaningful departures from the null hypothesis. With sufficient power, the null hypothesis will almost certainly be rejected in most realistic situations. This is because effect sizes will rarely be exactly zero. Even if the true effect size is zero in a particular instance, sufficient power can result in the rejection of the null hypothesis because the assumed statistical model will depart from the real-world situation in other ways. For most applications of statistical inference, then, *too much power* can result in mistaken inferences as well as *too little power.*

Here we encounter another way in which parapsychological inquiry differs from typical scientific inquiry. In those sciences that rely on statistical inference, they do so as an aid to weeding out effects that could be the result of chance variability. When effect sizes are very small or if the

experimenter needs to use many more cases than is typical for the field to obtain significance, the conclusions are often suspect. This is because we know that with enough cases an investigator will get a significant result, regardless of whether it is meaningful or not. Parapsychologists are unique in postulating a null hypothesis that entails a true effect size of zero if psi is not operating. Any significant outcome, then, becomes evidence for psi. My concern here is that small effects and other departures from the statistical model can be expected to occur in the absence of psi. The statistical model is only an approximation. When power is sufficient and when the statistical test is pushed too far, rejections of the null hypothesis are bound to occur. This is another important reason why claiming the existence of an anomaly based solely on evidence from statistical inference is problematic.

This is one concern about claiming the existence of an anomaly on the basis of statistical evidence. In the context of this report, I see it as a minor concern. As I have indicated, I am willing to grant Professor Utts' claim that the rejection of the null hypothesis is probably warranted in connection with the SAIC and the ganzfeld databases. I have other concerns. Both have to do with the fact that no other science, so far as I know, would draw conclusions about the existence of phenomena solely on the basis of statistical findings. Although it is consistent with scientific practice to use statistical inference to reject the null hypothesis, it is not consistent with such practice to postulate the existence of phenomena on this basis alone. Much more is required. I will discuss at least two additional requirements.

Thomas Kuhn's classic characterization of normal and revolutionary science has served as the catalyst for many discussions about the nature of scientific inquiry. He popularized the idea that normal scientific inquiry is guided by what he called *a paradigm*. Later, in the face of criticisms, he admitted that he had used the *term paradigm* to cover several distinct and sometimes contradictory features of the scientific process. One of his key uses of the term *paradigm* was to refer to the store of *exemplars* or textbook cases of standard experiments that every field of scientific inquiry possesses. These exemplars are what enable members of a scientific community to quickly learn and share common principles, procedures, methods, and standards. These exemplars are also the basis for initiating new members into the community. New research is conducted by adapting one or more of the patterns in existing exemplars as guidelines about what constitutes acceptable research in the field under consideration.

Every field of inquiry, including parapsychology, has its stock of exemplars. In parapsychology these would include the classic card guessing experiments of J.B. Rhine, the Sheep-Goat experiments, etc. What is critical here is the striking difference between the role of exemplars in parapsychology as contrasted with their role in all other fields of scientific inquiry. These exemplars not only serve as models of proper procedure, but they also are teaching tools. Students in a particular field of inquiry can be assigned the task of replicating some of these classic experiments. The instructor can make this assignment with the confident expectation that each student will obtain results consistent with the original findings. The physics instructor, for example, can ask novice students to try Newton's experiments with colors or Gilbert's experiments with magnets. The students who do so will get the expected results. The psychology instructor can ask novice students to repeat Ebbinghaus' experiments on forgetting or Peterson and Peterson's classic experiment on short-term memory and know that they will observe the same relationships as reported by the original experimenters.

Parapsychology is the only field of scientific inquiry that *does not have even one exemplar that can be assigned to students with the expectation that they will observe the original results!* In every domain of scientific inquiry, *with the exception of parapsychology,* many core exemplars or paradigms exist that will reliably produce the expected, lawful relationships. This is another way of saying that the other domains of inquiry are based upon robust, lawful phenomena whose conditions of occurrence can be specified in such a way that even novices will be able to observe and/or produce them. Parapsychologists do not possess even one exemplar for which they can confidently specify conditions that will enable anyone ♦let alone a novice—to reliably witness the phenomenon.

The situation is worse than I have so far described. The phenomena that can be observed with the standard exemplars do not require sensitive statistical rejections of the null hypothesis based on many trials to announce their presence. The exemplar in which the student uses a prism to break white light into its component colors requires no statistics or complicated inference at all. The forgetting curve in the Ebbinghaus experiment, requires nothing more than plotting proportion recalled against trial number. Yet, to the extent that parapsychology is approaching the day when it will possess at least one exemplar of this sort, the "observation" of the "phenomenon" will presumably depend upon the indirect use of statistical inference to document its presence.

In the standard domains of science, this problem of having not a single exemplar for reliably observing its alleged phenomenon, would be taken as a sign that the domain has *no central phenomena.* When Soviet scientists announced the discovery of mitogenetic radiation, some western scientists attempted to replicate the findings. Some reported success; others reported mixed results; and many failed entirely to observe the effect. Eventually scientists, including the Soviets, abandoned the quest for mitogenetic radiation. Because no one, including the original discover, could specify conditions under which the phenomenon--if there be one-could be observed, the scientific community decided that there was nothing to explain other than as-yet-undetected artifacts. The same story can be told about N-Rays, Polywater, and other candidate phenomena that could not be reliably observed or produced. We cannot explain something for which we do not have at least some conditions under which we can confidently say it occurs. Even this is not enough. The alleged phenomenon not only must reliably occur at least under some conditions but it also *must reliably vary in magnitude or other attributes as a function of other variables.* Without this minimal amount of lawfulness, the idea that there is something to explain is senseless. Yet, at best, parapsychology's current claim to having demonstrated a form of anomalous cognition rests on the possibility that it can generate significant differences from the null hypothesis under conditions that are still not reliably specified.

I will suggest one more reason for my belief that it is premature to try to account for what the SAIC and the ganzfeld experiments have so far put before us. On the basis of these experiments, contemporary parapsychologists claim that they have demonstrated the existence of an "anomaly." I will grant them that they have apparently demonstrated that the SAIC and the ganzfeld experiments have generated significant effect sizes beyond what we should expect from chance variations. I will further admit that, at this writing, I cannot suggest obvious methodological flaws to account for these significant effects. As I have previously mentioned, this admission does not mean that these experiments are free from subtle biases and potential bugs. The experimental paradigms are too recent and insufficiently evaluated to know for sure. I can point to departures from optimality that might harbor potential flaws--such as the use of a single judge across the remote viewing experiments, the active coaching of viewers by the experimenter during judging procedures in the ganzfeld, my discovery of peculiar patterns of scoring in the ganzfeld experiments, etc. Having granted that significant effects do occur in these experiments, I hasten to add that without further evidence, I do not think we can conclude that these effects are all due to the same cause—let alone that they result from a single phenomenon that is paranormal in origin.

The additional reason for concern is the difference in the use of 'anomaly' ;n this context and how the term 'anomaly' is used in other sciences. In the present context, the parapsychologists are using the term 'anomaly' to refer to apparently inexplicable departures from the null hypothesis. These departures are considered inexplicable in the sense that apparently all normal reasons for such departures from the null hypothesis have been excluded. But these departures are not lawful in the sense that the effect sizes are consistent. The effect sizes differ among viewers and subjects; they also differ for different experimenters; they come and go in inexplicable ways within the same subject. Possibly some of these variations in effect size will be found to exhibit some lawfulness in the sense that they will correlate with other variables. The SAIC investigators, for example, hope they have found such correlates in the entropy and bandwidth of targets. At the moment this is just a hope.

The term "anomaly" is used in a much more restricted sense in the other sciences. Typically an anomaly refers to a lawful and precise departure from a theoretical baseline. As such it is something the requires explaining. Astronomers were faced with a possible anomaly when discrepancies from Newtonian theory were reported in the orbit of Uranus. In the middle 1800s, Urban Leverrier decided to investigate this problem. He reviewed all the data on previous sightings of Uranus--both before and after it had been discovered as new planet. On the basis of the previous sightings, he laboriously recalculated the orbital path based on Newtonian theory and the reported coordinates. Sure enough, he found errors in the original calculations. When he corrected for these errors, the apparent discrepancy in Uranus' orbit was much reduced. But the newly revised orbit was still discrepant from where it should be on Newtonian theory. With this careful work, Leverrier had transformed a potential anomaly into an actual anomaly. Anomaly in this sense meant a precise and lawful departure from a well-defined theory. It was only after the precise nature, direction, and magnitude of this discrepancy was carefully specified did Leverrier and the scientific community decide that here was an anomaly that required explanation. What had to explain was quite precise. What was needed was an explanation that exactly accounted for this specific departure from the currently accepted theory.

Leverrier's solution was to postulate a new planet beyond the orbit of Uranus. This was no easy task because it involved the relatively unconstrained and difficult problem of inverse perturbations. Leverrier had to decide on a size, orbit, location, and other attributes of a hitherto unknown body whose characteristics would be just those to produce the observed effects on

Uranus without affecting the known orbit of Saturn. Leverrier's calculations resulted in his predicting the location of this hitherto unknown planet and the astronomer Galle located this new planet, Neptune, close to where Leverrier had said it would be.

The point of this story is to emphasize the distinction between the parapsychologists' use of anomaly from that of other scientists'. Anomalies in most domains of scientific inquiry are carefully specified deviations from a formal theory. What needs to be explained or accounted for is precisely described. The anomalies that parapsychologists are currently talking about differ from this standard meaning in that the departures are from the general statistical model and are far from having the status of carefully specified and precise deviations from a theoretical baseline. In this latter case we do not know what it is that we are being asked to explain. Under what conditions can we reliably observe it? What theoretical baselines are the results a departure from? How much and in what direction and form do the departures exist? What specifically must our explanation account for?

Finally, I should add that some parapsychologists, at least in the recent past, have agreed with my position that parapsychological results are not yet ready to be placed before the scientific community. Parapsychologists such as Beloff, Martin Johnson, Gardner Murphy, J.G. Pratt and others have complained that parapsychological data are volatile and messy. Some of these investigators have urged their colleagues to first get their house in order before they ask the scientific community at large to take them seriously. Martin Johnson, especially, has urged his colleagues to refrain from asking the scientific community to accept their findings until they can tame them and produce lawful results under specified conditions. Clearly, parapsychology has still not reached this desired state. At best, the results of the SAIC experiments combined with other contemporary findings offer hope that the parapsychologists may be getting closer to the day when they can put something before the scientific community and challenge it to provide an explanation.

## POTENTIALS FOR OPERATIONAL APPLICATIONS

It may seem obvious that the utility of remote viewing for intelligence gathering should depend upon its scientific validity. If the scientific research cannot confirm the existence of a remote

viewing ability, then it would seem to be pointless to try an use this non-existent ability for any practical application. However, the matter is not this simple. If the scientific research confirms the existence of anomalous cognition, this does not guarantee that this ability would have useful applications. Ed May, in his presentation to the evaluation panel, gave several reasons why remote viewing could be real and, yet, not helpful for intelligence gathering. In his opinion, approximately 20 percent of the information supplied by a viewer is accurate. Unfortunately, at the time the remote viewer is generating the information, we have no way of deciding which portion is likely to be the accurate one. Another problem is that the viewer's information could be accurate, yet not relevant for the intelligence analyst's purposes.

This question is related to the problem of boundary conditions which I discussed earlier in this report. From both a scientific and an operational viewpoint the claim that anomalous cognition exists is not very credible until we have ways to specify when and when it is not present. So far, parapsychology seems to have concentrated only in finding ways to document the existence of anomalous cognition. The result is a patchwork quilt of markers that, when present, are offered as evidence for the presence of psi. These markers or indicators include the decline effect, negative hitting as well as positive hitting, displacement hitting, the incline effect, increased variability, decreased variability and just about any other way a discrepancy from a probability model can occur. A cynic will note that the absence of any or most of these markers is not used as evidence for the *absence* of psi. This lack of way to distinguish between the presence and absence of anomalous cognition creates many challenges for parapsychology, some of which I have already discussed.

So, even if remote viewing is a real ability possessed by some individuals, its usefulness for intelligence gathering is questionable. If May is correct, then 80% of the all the information supplied by this talented viewer will be erroneous. Without any way to tell which statements of the views are reliable and which are not, the use of this information may make matters worse rather than better.

Can remote viewing have utility for information gathering even if it cannot be scientifically validated? I can imagine some possibilities for remote viewing to be an asset to the intelligence analyst even when the viewer possesses no valid paranormal powers. The viewer might be a person of uncommonly good sense or have a background that enables him or her to provide

helpful information even if it does not come from a paranormal source. Another possibility is that the viewer, even though lacking in any truly accurate intelligence information, might say things or open up new ways of dealing with the analyst's problem. In this latter scenario the remote viewer is a catalyst that may open up new ways of looking at an intelligence situation much like programs for problem solving and creative thinking stimulate new ways of looking at a situation. However, if the usefulness of the remote viewer reduces to a matter of injecting common sense or new perspectives into the situation, I believe that we can accomplish the same purpose in more efficient ways.

In considering potential utility, I am most concerned about separation of the operational program in remote viewing from the research and development phase. By default, the assessment of the usefulness of the remote viewing in the operational arena is decided entirely by subjective validation or what May and Utts *call prima facie* evidence. Granted it is difficult to assess adequately the effectiveness of remote viewing in the operational domain. Nevertheless, better ways can be devised than have apparently been used up to now. In our current attempt to get an initial idea about the effectiveness of the current operational use of remote viewing, we have simply been asking individuals and agencies who have used the services of the remote viewers, if the information they received was accurate and useful. Whatever information we get from this survey is extremely limited for the purposes of judging the utility of remote viewing in the operational domain.

Even psychologists who should know better underrate the power of subjective validation. Anyone who relies *on prima facie* evidence as a basis for affirming the validity of remote viewing should carefully read that portion of Marks and Kamman's *The psychology of the psychic* [1981] in which they discuss the SRI and their own experiments on remote viewing. In the early stages of their attempt to replicate the SRI remote viewing experiments, they were astonished at the high quality of their subject's protocols and the apparent accuracy of the viewing. After each session, the experimenters and the subject (viewer) would visit the target site and compare the verbal protocol with the actual site. The specific details of the viewers' responses appeared to match specific objects in the target site with uncanny accuracy. When they gave the verbal protocols to the judge, a distinguished professor, to blindly match against the actual target sites, he was astonished at how well what he considered the closest matching protocol for each site matched

If certain people (or all people to a greater or lesser extent, as has been proposed by some investigators) possess the ability to see and describe target locations they have not visited, this ability might prove of great value to the intelligence community. As an adjunct method to gathering intelligence, people who possess this ability could be asked to describe various intelligence targets. This information, especially if considered credible and reliable, could supplement and enhance more time-consuming and perhaps dangerous methods for collecting data. Although certain (perhaps unwarranted) assumptions, such as the availability of a sender, are implicit in this argument, the possibility of gathering intelligence through this mechanism has provided the major impetus for government interest in remote viewing.

Remote viewing was and continues to be a controversial phenomenon. Early research on remote viewing was plagued by a number of statistical and methodological flaws.[1] One statistical flaw found in early studies of remote viewing, for example, was due to failure to control for the elimination of locations already judged. For example, if there were five targets in the set, judges might lower their rankings for a viewing already judged as a "hit" or ranked first. In other words, all targets did not have an equal probability of being assigned all ranks. Another commonly noted methodological flaw was that cues in the remote viewing paradigm, such as the time needed to drive to various locations, may have allowed viewers to produce hits without using any parapsychological ability.

More recent research has attempted to control for many of these problems. New paradigms have been developed where, for example, viewers—in double-blind conditions—are asked to visualize pictures drawn from a target pool consisting of National Geographic photographs. In addition to this experimental work, an applied program of intelligence operations actually using remote viewers has been developed. In the following chapter, we describe the history of the government's remote viewing program.

[1]Many of these problems are described in the National Research Council Report.

actual details of the target. He had no doubt that the viewers had demonstrated strong remote viewing abilities.

So, both the viewers and the judge quickly became convinced of the reality of remote viewing on the basis of the uncanny matches between the verbal descriptions and the actual target sites. The experimenters received a rude awakening when they discovered that, despite the striking matches observed between target and verbal description, the judge had matched the verbal protocols to the wrong target sites. When all parties were given the results the subjects could not understand how the judge could have matched any but the actual target site to their descriptions. For them the match was so obvious that it would be impossible for the judge to have missed it. The judge, on the other hand, could not accept that any but the matches he made could be paired with the actual target sites.

This phenomenon of subjective validation is pervasive, compelling and powerful. Psychologists have demonstrated it in a variety of settings. I have demonstrated it and written about in the context of the psychic reading. In the present context, subjective validation comes about when a person evaluates the similarity between a relatively rich verbal description and an actual target or situation. Inevitably, many matches will be found. Once the verbal description has been judged to be a good match to a given target, the description gets locked in and it becomes virtually impossible for the judge to see the description as fitting any but the original target.

Unfortunately, all the so-called *prima facie* evidence put before us is tainted by subjective validation. We are told that the many details supplied by the viewers were indeed inaccurate. But some details were uncannily correct and even, in one case, hidden code words were correctly revealed. Such accounts do indeed seem compelling. They have to be put in the context, however, of all such operational attempts. We have to know the general background and expectations of the viewers, the questioners, etc. Obviously, the targets selected for the viewers in the operational setting will have military and intelligence relevance. If the viewer [some of the viewers have intelligence backgrounds] suspects the general nature of the target, then previous background knowledge might very well make the presence, say of a gantry, highly likely. In addition, the interactions and questioning of the viewers in these settings appear to be highly suggestive and leading.

I can imagine that the preceding paragraph might strike a reader as being unreasonable. Even allowing for subjective validation, the possibility that a viewer might accurately come up with secret code words and a detailed description of particular gantry is quite remote on the basis of common sense and sophisticated guessing. I understand the complaint and I realize the reluctance to dismiss such evidence out of hand. However, I have had experience with similarly *compelling prima facie* evidence for more than a chance match between a description and a target. In the cases I have in mind, however, the double blind controls were used to pair descriptions with the true as well as with the wrong target sites. In all these test cases with which I am familiar, the unwitting subjects found the matches between their descriptions and the presumed target equally compelling regardless of whether the presumed target was the actual or the wrong one.

What this says about operational effectiveness, is that, for evaluation purposes, half of the time the viewers and the judges should be mislead about the what was the actual target. In these cases, both the interrogator and the viewer, as well as the judge, have to be blind to the actual targets. Under such conditions, if the judges and the others find the matches between the verbal descriptions and the actual targets consistently better than the matches between the verbal descriptions and the decoy targets, then this would constitute some evidence for the effectiveness of remote viewing. I can confidently predict, regardless of the outcome of such an evaluation, that many of the verbal descriptions when matched with decoy targets will be judged to be uncanny matches.

## SUGGESTIONS: WHAT NEXT?

I have played the devil's advocate in this report. I have argued that the case for the existence of anomalous cognition is still shaky, at best. On the other hand, I want to state that I believe that the SAIC experiments as well as the contemporary ganzfeld experiments display methodological and statistical sophistication well above previous parapsychological research. Despite better controls and careful use of statistical inference, the investigators seem to be getting significant results that do not appear to derive from the more obvious flaws of previous research. I have argued that this does not justify concluding that anomalous cognition has been demonstrated. However, it does suggest that it might be worthwhile to allocate some resources toward seeing whether these findings can be independently replicated. If so, then it will be time to reassess if it is

worth pursuing the task of determining if these effects do indeed reflect the operation of anomalous cognition. This latter quest will involve finding lawful relationships between attributes of this hypothesized phenomenon and different independent variables. Both the scientific and operational value of such an alleged phenomenon will depend upon how well the conditions for its occurrence can be specified and how well its functioning can be brought under control.

Both Professor Utts and I agree that the very first consideration is to see if the SAIC remote viewing results will still be significant when independent judges are used. I understand Ed May's desire to use a judge who is very familiar with the response styles of the experienced viewers. However, if remote viewing is real, then conscientious judges, who are blind to the actual targets, should still be able to match the verbal descriptions to the actual targets better than chance. If this cannot be done, the viability of the case for remote viewing becomes problematical. On the other hand, assuming that independent judges can match the descriptions to the correct targets reasonably well, then it becomes worthwhile to try to independently replicate the SAIC experiments.

At this point we face some interesting questions. Should we try to replicate the remote viewing studies by using the same viewers, the same targets, and the same protocol? Perhaps change only the experimenters, the judge, and the laboratory? At some point we would also want to change the targets. For completeness, we would also want to search for new, talented viewers.

If independent replications confirm the SAIC findings, we still have a long way to go. However, at this stage in the proceedings, the scientific community at large might be willing to acknowledge that an anomaly of some sort has been demonstrated. Before the scientific community will go beyond this acknowledgment, the parapsychologists will have to devise a positive theory of anomalous communication from which they can make testable predictions about relationships between anomalous communication and other variables.

# CONCLUSIONS

## THE SCIENTIFIC STATUS OF THE SAIC RESEARCH PROGRAM

1. The SAIC experiments on anomalous mental phenomena are statistically and methodologically superior to the earlier SRI remote viewing research as well as to previous parapsychological studies. In particular, the experiments avoided the major flaw of non-independent trials for a given viewer. The investigators also made sure to avoid the problems of multiple statistical testing that was characteristic of much previous parapsychological research.

2. From a scientific viewpoint, the SAIC program was hampered by its secrecy and the multiple demands placed upon it. The secrecy kept the program from benefiting from the checks and balances that comes from doing research in a public forum. Scrutiny by peers and replication in other laboratories would accelerated the scientific contributions from the program. The multiple demands placed on the program meant that too many things were being investigated with too few resources. As a result, no particular finding was followed up in sufficient detail to pin it down scientifically. Ten experiments, no matter how well conducted, are insufficient to fully resolve one important question, let alone the several that were posed to the SAIC investigators.

3. Although, I cannot point to any obvious flaws in the experiments, the experimental program is too recent and insufficiently evaluated to be sure that flaws and biases have been eliminated. Historically, each new paradigm in parapsychology has appeared to its designers and contemporary critics as relatively flawless. Only subsequently did previously unrecognized drawbacks come to light. Just as new computer programs require a shakedown period before hidden bugs come to light, each new scientific program requires scrutiny over time in the public arena before its defects emerge. Some possible sources of problems for the SAIC program are its reliance on experienced viewers, and the use of the same judge--one who is familiar to the viewers, for all the remote viewing.

4. The statistical departures from chance appear to be too large and consistent to attribute to statistical flukes of any sort. Although I cannot dismiss the possibility that these rejections of the null hypothesis might reflect limitations in the statistical model as an approximation of the experimental situation, I tend to agree with Professor Utts that real effects are occurring in these experiments. *Something* other than chance departures from the null hypothesis has occurred in these experiments.

5. However, the occurrence of statistical effects does not warrant the conclusion that psychic functioning has been demonstrated. Significant departures from the null hypothesis can occur for several reasons. Without a positive theory of anomalous cognition, we cannot say that these effects are due to a single cause, let alone claim they reflect anomalous cognition. We do not yet know how replicable these results will be, especially in terms of showing consistent relations to other variables. The investigators report findings that they believe show that the degree of anomalous cognition varies with target entropy and the 'bandwidth' of the target set. These findings are preliminary and only suggestive at this time. Parapsychologists, in the past, have reported finding other correlates of psychic functioning such as extroversion, sheep/goats, altered states only to find that later studies could not replicate them.

6. Professor Utts and the investigators point to what they see as consistencies between the outcome of contemporary ganzfeld experiments and the SAIC results. The major consistency is similarity of average effect sizes across experiments. Such consistency is problematical because these average effect sizes, in each case, are the result of arbitrary combinations from different investigators and conditions. None of these averages can be justified as estimating a meaningful parameter. Effect size, by itself, says nothing about its origin. Where parapsychologists see consistency, I see inconsistency. The ganzfeld studies are premised on the idea that viewers must be in altered state for successful results. The remote viewing studies use viewers in a normal state. The ganzfeld experimenters believe that the viewers should judge the match between their ideation and the target for best results; the remote viewers believe that independent judges provide better evidence for psi than viewers judging their own responses. The recent autoganzfeld studies found successful hitting only with dynamic targets and only chance results with static targets. The SAIC investigators, in one study, found hitting with static targets and

not with dynamic ones. In a subsequent study they found hitting for both types of targets. They suggest that they may have solution to this apparent inconsistency in terms of their concept of bandwidth. At this time, this is only suggestive.

7. The challenge to parapsychology, if it hopes to convincingly claim the discover, of anomalous cognition, is to go beyond the demonstration of significant effects. The parapsychologists need to achieve the ability to specify conditions under which one can reliably witness their alleged phenomenon. They have to show that they can generate lawful relationships between attributes of this alleged phenomenon and independent variables. They have to be able to specify boundary conditions that will enable us to detect when anomalous cognition is and *is not* present.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Both Professor Utts and I agree that the first step should be to have the SAIC protocols rejudged by independent judges who are blind to the actual target.

2. Assuming that such independent judging confirms the extra-chance matchings, the findings should be replicated in independent laboratories. Replication could take several forms. Some of the original viewers from the SAIC experiments could be used. However, it seems desirable to use a new target set and several independent judges.

## OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. The current default assessment of the operational effectiveness of remote viewing is fraught with hazards. Subjective validation is well known to generate compelling, but false, convictions that a description matches a target in striking ways. Better, double blind, ways of assessing operational effectiveness can be used. I suggest at least one way in the report.

2. The ultimate assessment of the potential utility of remote viewing for intelligence gathering cannot be separated from the findings of laboratory research.

## The Reply

### Response to Ray Hyman's Report of September 11, 1995 "Evaluation of Program in Anomalous Mental Phenomena"

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Ray Hyman's report of September 11, 1995, written partially in response to my written report of September 1, 1995 elucidates the issues on which he and I agree and disagree. I basically concur with his assessment, but there are three issues he raises with regard to the scientific status of parapsychology to which I would like to respond.

1. "Only parapsychology, among the fields of inquiry claiming scientific status, lacks a cumulative database (p.6)."

It is simply not true that parapsychology lacks a cumulative database. In fact, the accumulated database is truly impressive for a science that has had so few resources. While critics are fond of relating, as Professor Hyman does in his report, that there has been "more than a century of parapsychological research (p. 7)" psychologist Sybo Schouten (1993, p.316) has noted that the total human and financial resources devoted to parapsychology since 1882 is at best equivalent to the expenditures devoted to fewer than two months of research in conventional psychology in the United States.

On pages 4 and 5 of their September 29, 1994 SAIC final report, May, Luke and James summarize four reports that do precisely what Professor Hyman claims is not done in parapsychology; they put forth the accumulated evidence for anomalous cognition in a variety of

formats. Rather than dismissing the former experiments, parapsychologists build on them. As in any area of science, it is of course the most recent experiments that receive the most attention, but that does not mean that the field would divorce itself from past work. Quite to the contrary, past experimental results and methodological weaknesses are used to design better and more efficient experiments.

As an example of the normal progress of inquiry expected in any area of science, the autoganzfeld experiments currently conducted by parapyscholgists did not simply spring out of thin air. The original ganzfeld experiments followed from Honorton's observation at Maimondies Medical Center, that anomalous cognition seemed to work well in dreams. He investigated ways in which a similar state could be achieved in normal waking hours, and found the ganzfeld regime in another area of psychology. The automated ganzfeld followed from a critical evaluation of the earlier ganzfeld experiments, and a set of conditions agreed upon by Honorton and Professor Hyman. The current use of dynamic targets in autoganzfeld experiments follows from the observation that they were more successful than static targets in the initial experiments. The investigation of entropy at SAIC follows from this observation as well. This is just one example of how current experiments are built from past results.

2. "Only parapsychology claims to be a science on the basis of phenomena (or a phenomenon) whose presence can be detected only by rejecting a null hypothesis (p.8)."

While it is true that parapsychology has not figured out all the answers, it does not differ from normal science in this regard. It is the norm of scientific progress to make observations first, and then to attempt to explain them. Before quantum mechanics was developed there were a number of anomalies observed in physics that could not be explained. There are many observations in physics and in the social and medical sciences that can be observed, either statistically or deterministically, but which cannot be explained.

As a more recent example, consider the impact of electromagnetic fields on health. An article in Science (Vol. 269, 18 August, p. 911) reported that "After spending nearly a decade reviewing the literature on electromagnetic fields (EMFs), a panel of the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) has produced a draft report concluding that some health effects linked to EMFs--such as cancer and immune deficiencies--appear real and warrant steps to

reduce EMF exposure... Biologists have failed to pinpoint a convincing mechanism of action." In other words, a statistical effect has been convincingly established and it is now the responsibility of science to attempt to establish its mechanism, just as in parapsychology.

As yet another example, consider learning and memory, which have long been studied in psychology. We know they exist, but brain researchers are just beginning to understand how they work by using sophisticated brain imaging techniques. Psychologists do not understand these simple human capabilities, and they certainly do not understand other observable human phenomena such as what causes people to fall in love. Yet, no one would deny the existence of these phenomena just because we do not understand them.

In any area involving the natural variability inherent in humans, science progresses by first observing a statistical difference and then attempting to explain it. At this stage, I believe parapsychology has convincingly demonstrated that an effect is present, and future research attempts should be directed at finding an explanation. In this regard parapsychology in on par with scientific questions like the impact of electromagnetic fields on health, or the cross-cultural differences in memory that have been observed by psychologists.

3. "Parapsychology is the only field of scientific inquiry that does not have even one exemplar that can be assigned to students with the expectation that they will observe the original results (p. 18)."

I disagree with this statement for two reasons. First, I can name other phenomena for which students could not be expected to do a simple experiment and observe a result, such as the connection between taking aspirin and preventing heart attacks or the connection between smoking and getting lung cancer. What differentiates these phenomena from simple experiments like splitting light with a prism is that the effects are statistical in nature and are not expected to occur every single time. Not everyone who smokes gets lung cancer, but we can predict the proportion who will. Not everyone who attempts anomalous cognition will be successful, but I think we can predict the proportion of time success should be achieved.

Since I believe the probability of success has been established in the autoganzfeld experiments, I would offer them as the exemplar Professor Hyman requests. The problem is that to be relatively

**Friday, April 25, 2014**

## THE TRAGIC STORY OF ELSIE PAROUBEK

The story of the kidnapping and murder of a young girl named Elsie Paroubek in the spring of 1911 is almost a forgotten tale in the annals of Chicago crime. Few but the most dedicated historians remember much about the case today, but at the time, her disappearance and the subsequent search for her involved law enforcement officials from three states and galvanized the people of Chicago. Nearly everyone was transfixed by the newspaper articles dedicated to the story – a story that did not have a happy ending.

To this day, the murder of Elsie Paroubek has never been solved.

Eliška "Elsie" Paroubek's mother was born Karolína Vojáček in November 1869, in Míčov, East Bohemia, in what is now the Czech Republic. Elsie's father, František (Frank) Paroubek, was born in Bohemia in 1867. At the age of 15, he came to the United States, but later returned to Bohemia for a ten-year span between 1882 and 1892. He and Karolina were married in Bohemia in 1892 and returned to America. Frank worked as a painter while Karolina took care of their home and raised a large brood of children. Eliška (Elsie) was their seventh child. She was a happy child with light, golden hair, blue eyes and a ready smile.



**The only known photograph of Elsie Paroubek**

On the morning of April 8, 1911, five-year-old Elsie left her home at 2320 South Albany Avenue in Chicago, telling her mother that she was going to visit "Auntie," who was Mrs. Frank Trampota, who lived around the corner at 2325 South Troy Street. Turning left on 22nd Street, then left again on Troy, she met her nine-year-old cousin, Josie Trampota, and a number of other children who were listening to an organ grinder on the street. When the organ grinder moved on to the corner of 23rd Street, the children followed him past Mrs. Trampota's gate – except for Elsie, who stayed behind. At that point, no one realized that she was missing.

Several hours later, Elsie's mother followed her daughter to the Trampota house. When she arrived at her sister's, Karolina learned that Elsie had never arrived. Because the little girl had many friends in the neighborhood, the women assumed that she must be visiting at another home, perhaps even spending the night and returning in the morning. At 9:00 p.m. that evening, Frank Paroubek came home from work and learned about Elsie's absence. He was not as unconcerned as his wife and sister-in-law and went immediately to the Hinman Street police station to report her missing. Initially, the police agreed that it was likely she was

staying with friends, but when Elsie had not returned home the next morning, Captain John Mahoney took personal charge of the search for the missing girl.

Detectives from several stations canvassed the neighborhood and suspects soon emerged. A boy named John Jirowski told detectives from the Maxwell Street station, led by Inspector Stephen K. Healey, that he had seen a "gypsy" wagon (identified as Romani people in some accounts) on Kedzie Avenue, a block west of Troy Street. There were two women on the wagon and one of them was holding a little girl. The police knew of several gypsy camps along the Des Plaines River, near Kedzie, and went down to speak with the residents. They told investigators that one wagon had decamped and left on the morning of April 9. While the idea of being "stolen by gypsies" sounds far-fetched today, the theory was plausible at the time because Elsie's disappearance was almost identical to that of a girl named Lillian Wulff, who had been found with gypsies four years earlier.



**A gypsy family photographed in Chicago around 1911**

Meanwhile, Frank Paroubek had offered his life savings of $50 (about $1,165 today) as a reward for the girl's return. Detectives from Maxwell Street searched the Italian neighborhoods around West 14th and South Halsted Streets, where it was reported that a girl fitting Elsie's description had been seen with an organ grinder. Inspector Healey ordered that the drainage canals be dragged for the child's body on April 12, and again on April 15, and Illinois Governor Dan S. Deneen asked the public to assist with the search. Soon, there were thousands of people on the lookout for the little girl – but she was nowhere to be found.

Frank Paroubek, accompanied by Detectives Komorous and Sheehan, went in search of the departed gypsy wagon, which was originally believed to be headed for Round Lake, Illinois, a small town about 50 miles northwest of Chicago. There were about seven wagons encamped there at the time and local farmers were alerted to be on the watch for Elsie. Unfortunately, many of them took it upon themselves to question the gypsies and attempt to search their wagons. In the middle of the night, they broke camp, now headed for Volo, Illinois. Volo residents reported a child matching Elsie's description with the gypsies, adding that she appeared to be "stupefied" or "drugged" and partly covered with a blanket. They also attempted to search the wagons, but the gypsies again escaped and departed for McHenry, Illinois, about 60 miles from Chicago. When the police finally caught up with them at McHenry, they discovered the little girl was a gypsy and did not match Elsie at all, other than they were about the same size and age.

According to the police, the gypsies often kidnapped small children because of the "natural love of the wandering people for blue-eyed, yellow-haired children." The *Chicago Daily News*

consistently described Elsie as small, “having long curly golden hair, blue eyes and pink chubby cheeks, with a prominent dimple in each. At the time she disappeared she wore a red hat, a red dress, black stockings and high top black boots.”

The entire city was on the lookout for the girl. On April 17, Police Captain Mahoney received an anonymous telephone call saying that a child of Elsie’s description had been seen with a man at a hotel in Western Springs, Illinois. Again, detectives dispatched to the hotel found nothing. In Sycamore, Illinois, the local police chief accompanied Frank Paroubek when he investigated several gypsy wagons at Cherry Valley. But they found no children resembling Elsie. Meanwhile, Hinman Street police officers fielded reporters' questions about a $500 ransom note received by Karolina. They "denied official knowledge of the communication, but admitted it might be true.” Nothing ever came of the alleged ransom note.



**Lillian Wulff, who advised police on how to proceed in case Elsie Paroubek had been stolen by gypsies.**

In the second week after Elsie’s disappearance, Lillian Wulff, now age 11, came to the police to offer her assistance. She had been the subject of an identical manhunt four years earlier when she had been stolen by gypsies and forced to work for six days as a beggar. She was recovered after being spotted by a farmer as she was walking behind a gypsy wagon outside Momence, Illinois. Lillian provided what details she could about the typical behavior of the gypsies and offered to lead a “rescue party” if Elsie was found. One of the men who had kidnapped Lillian was tracked down in prison and suggested that the police contact Elijah George – the “King of the Gypsies” -- for help. George was found in Argyle, Wisconsin and brought to Joliet, but “failed to give the desired information” and was released. At this point, Inspector Healey again ordered the drainage canal dragged, along with a search of wells, cisterns and other places into which Elsie might have fallen.

By April 30, Elsie had been missing for three weeks and the city was in an uproar. The superintendent of schools, Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, requested that all of the schoolchildren in the Chicago area organized neighborhood searchers during their spring break. Around this same time, Frank Paroubek, out of desperation, consulted a psychic medium, who said that Elson was in Argo, Wisconsin. Chicago politician Charles J. Vopicka sent officers to the area that she indicated, but there was no sign of the girl. The search went from Illinois to Wisconsin, from Wisconsin to Minnesota and then back again to Illinois – but with no luck.

In the midst of the investigation, something sinister was going on. A few days after Elsie had vanished, Frank Paroubek began receiving anonymous letters from an unknown source. The letters, described as “insulting,” were all written in English, which he could not read. He asked neighbors to translate. The letters claimed that Elsie had been taken by someone who

“hated” the Paroubeks and accused the family of mistreating her. Frank was so angry about the accusations that he burned the letters. Regardless, detectives attempted to follow up on the lead.

The Czech community in Chicago rallied to support the family. All Czech-speaking policemen were put into plainclothes and assigned to the investigation. The women’s auxiliary of the Club Bohemia also helped with the search, creating what they called an “endless chain letter,” which was mailed to every party of the city, asking that recipients mail copies to everyone they knew. Various Czech-American politicians became involved and the Bohemian Charitable Association offered a $500 reward. Other reward offers poured in. Governor Deneen asked the legislature to revise the statutes so that a reward could be offered by the state of Illinois. At that time, state laws did not allow the offering of a reward for the apprehension of kidnappers, as it did for murderers. Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr. contributed $25 ($600 in today’s money) to a personal reward fund that was set up. Anton Cermak, then a Chicago alderman, stated that if Elsie was not found by the next city council meeting on May 1, he would call upon the city council to offer an even larger reward.

The police were overwhelmed with calls. Every time a girl in a red dress was sighted in a gypsy camp, the tip was called into the police. By May 1, though, investigators had all but abandoned the idea that Elsie had been stolen by gypsies and returned to their efforts of searching wells and dragging rivers and canals. Judge Joseph Sabath objected to what he said was a lackluster search. He claimed that the police hunt was becoming "listless" because Elsie's parents were poor. He had been receiving contributions to the reward fund from all over the country and increased his own contribution to $100.

Meanwhile, Detectives Zahour and Zalasky were still searching for the writer of the letters that had been sent to the Paroubeks. They believed that the man lived near Madison and Robey Streets and that he knew more about the disappearance than he was saying. Lieutenant Costello, supported by Inspector Healey, flatly declared: "Elsie Paroubek fell into the drainage canal from the Kedzie Avenue Bridge or near it. She was not murdered." They believed the author of the letters witnessed her fall. Their search turned up no trace of him, however.

The search of the gypsy camps continued. By May 7, twenty-five camps had been searched and several false leads had turned up nothing. Police Captain Mahoney sadly announced his belief that Elsie was dead, but vowed that the police would continue to search for her body.

**The drainage canal near Lockport in 1911**

The search didn’t last much longer. Two days later, an electrical engineer named George T. Scully, along with other employees of the Lockport power plant near Joliet, discovered a body floating in the drainage canal. At first they thought it was an animal from one of the nearby farms, but three hours later, realizing that it looked like a child, they sent out a boat to bring it to shore. Undertaker William Goodale, who was called to examine the body, said that it appeared to fit the description of Elsie Paroubek: "The description tallied to the shade of the



hair, the texture of the stockings, and the stuff and tint of the dress of little Elsie." He stated that he believed the body had been in the water for several weeks. It was badly decomposed and original reports said there were "no marks of violence" on the body.

Goodale notified Chicago authorities, who sent Police Lieutenant Costello to the Paroubek home. When she saw the grim-faced policeman on her doorstep, hat in hand, Karolina Paroubek cried out, "Mé drahé dítě!" (My dear child!) and she begged to be told Elsie was alive. Frank was taken to the Goodale funeral home at midnight. He said, "The clothes look like Elsie's. But the face -- I can't recognize it. Her mother alone can tell."

The next morning, Karolina was brought to the Lockport undertaker's parlor by trolley car and she positively identified the dead girl as her daughter. She was quoted, "It's you, my darling. Thank God we've found you and you're not in the hands of the gypsies." For the next hour, she paced back and forth or sat nervously with her husband in an adjoining room. Frank held her hands and they wept and prayed together. Goodale, who had followed the investigation into the girl's disappearance in the newspapers, made a statement to the police: "The body appears to have been in the water for about a month, which would tally with the date of Elsie Paroubek's disappearance. The child, when she left home, was without hat, and her clothing tallies in every respect with that found on the dead body. There was no ring or other ornament, and in that respect the descriptions correspond. Excepting only as to the color of the eyes, which cannot be clearly observed as to color, the descriptions are identical."

Arrangements were made for an inquest, with Coroner William Wunderlich of Will County presiding. Frank Paroubek was called as the first witness. Disregarding questions asked of him by the coroner, Paroubek insisted that his daughter had been murder. Through a translator, he told the jury, "I am sure the gypsies stole my girl and then when they knew we were after them they killed her and threw her body into the canal."

At this assertion, chaos broke out in the jury room. Karolina began screaming and ran from the funeral parlor where the inquest was being held, shouting, "My Elsie is dead! She was murdered, murdered!" Her husband and Detective Zelasky tried to calm her down but in her extreme distress, she started running up and down the street, drawing a crowd of curious onlookers. She insisted that she had known for three weeks that "gypsies" had killed Elsie and that the police had done nothing about it. Frank eventually was able to calm her down and assisted her in boarding a trolley car for home.

The results of the inquest were inconclusive. Coroner Wunderlich stated, "This case has attracted such attention that a minute examination will be made. We will be content with no perfunctory inquest such as this. The jury will refuse to state its convictions -- for it has none -

- until after the autopsy has been held. We want the stomach of the little girl examined, and the lungs as well. The father charges murder. It is certainly possible that he is right."

During the autopsy, two physicians, E.A. Kingston and W.R. Paddock, confirmed that Elsie had not drowned – there was no water in her lungs. Kingston said that she had been "attacked" (a euphemism for rape) and murdered before her body was placed in the water. Paddock said that there was evidence that she had been "wounded" before she was killed. Lieutenant Costello later told the press that she had been "mistreated," which seemed to indicate that her death had not been the work of gypsies. They also found "deep cuts" on the left side of her face. Although these doctors reported "blue marks on the throat as though the victim had been choked," another examination by Dr. E.R. LeCount and Dr. Warren H. Hunter of the Coroner's Office revealed that Elsie had been suffocated, not strangled. The official cause of death was listed as "unknown." Coroner Peter Hoffman agreed with Frank Paroubek as to the probably circumstances of Elsie's death – the little girl had been murdered, he believed.

Coroner Hoffman announced, "It is our belief that the abductor of the child suffocated her to death -- possibly by putting a hand over her mouth." The coroner's report recommended that officials continue to investigate. Inspector Healey immediately detailed detectives on a case that had changed from a missing girl to a murdered one. He told reporters, "We have one or two theories, but nothing specific enough to talk about. I intend to place more men on the case tomorrow." Meanwhile, Lieutenant Costello returned to investigating the anonymous letters that were sent to the Paroubeks, believing them to be the key to solving the case.

On the evening of May 9, Karolina was considerably calmer and gave an interview to reporters at her home. Surrounded by friends and neighbors, she told them, "Before the doctors found that Elsie's lungs were free from water and discovered reasons for believing she had been strangled, I knew she had been murdered. A picture of the crime has been in my mind since the second week of her disappearance, and I am convinced that when the truth is known, as it surely will be, it will be shown that she was choked to death a week from April 8, when she was kidnapped on her way to visit her 'auntie.'" Karolina urged the police to find and punish the killers.

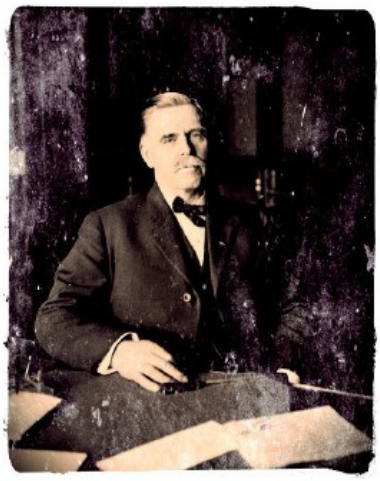


**Judge Joseph Sabath**

Unfortunately, the poor family had other matters to deal with – Elsie's funeral, which they could not afford. Karolina told Judge Sabath that the search had exhausted all of the money the family had and there was nothing left to bury her with. The judge gave her a check for $25 and promised to raise more funds. Friends and family members pitched in and gave money and also raised more money for the reward fund. Mrs. Sophie Johanes raised over $50 by giving a benefit party and soliciting donations from Bohemians on the West Coast.

Elsie's funeral was held on May 12, on the front lawn of the Paroubek home. Hours before it was scheduled to begin, mourners and onlookers began to gather, numbering almost 3,000. They crowded into the yard, around the house, along balconies and on porches of nearby homes. There was no hall in the neighborhood large enough to hold them all. The Paroubeks had been offered the use of a union hall, but Frank knew there were just too many people and he didn't want to turn anyone away. He said, "They have come to say goodbye to my Elsie. Don't let them be disappointed." Reserve police officers from the Hinman Street station were tasked with keeping order and preventing the crowd from breaking down the fence.

Elsie's tiny white coffin was placed on two brass stands, surrounded by lilies of the valley, roses and carnations sent by Mayor Harrison, Judge Sabath and numerous city officials. Eight little girls dressed all in white brought out huge sprays of lilies and roses and encircled the stand. Someone brought out two chairs from the Paroubek home, set them near the casket, placed a board across them and used it as a platform to hold the hundreds of floral offerings. Karolina was seated at the head of the coffin, while Frank and the other children stood nearby. The Paroubeks were not religious, so a simple service was read by Rudolph Jaromir Psenka, editor of the *Bohemian Chicago Daily Svornost*. He spoke of the need to cooperate with the police to find Elsie's killers. As the undertaker went to lift the coffin into the hearse, Karolina begged him to open it so she could see Elsie's face once more, but her relatives persuaded her to let him go about his duties. Most of the attendees followed Elsie's casket to Bohemian National Cemetery, where Psenka gave another address.



**Police Chief John McWeeny**

With the funeral over, the police investigation was reinvigorated, despite the time that had passed. Police Chief John McWeeny vowed to devote the entire Chicago police force to finding the killer. Alderman Cermak asked Governor Deneen to increase the reward by another $200 and he announced that he would, "Ask the governor to issue a proclamation calling upon all the people of the state to interest themselves in this case, in order that her murderer be apprehended." Coroner Peter Hoffman also started a public reward fund, contributing $25 out of his own pocket.

Investigators soon had a suspect – a man named Joseph Konesti. Described as a "bearded Bohemian" and a "hermit peddler," he was said to have "frequently enticed little girls to his hut by the drainage canal" – the same canal where Elsie's body was discovered. He lived in a shack about a mile and a half from the Paroubek home and had been "frequently been seen" nearby. The owner of the shack that he lived in, Mrs. David Shaughnessy, told police that she had complained to Konesti about "bringing children around the house," and had evicted him on May 9. The following day, knowing he was suspected by the police for the murder, he threw himself in front of a train and was killed. Five days later, though, he was cleared of any wrongdoing.

On May 15, Frank Paroubek had information for the investigators. He told detectives that he

had spoken to a man he did not know, who told him that he had seen Elsie later in the afternoon on April 8 on Kedzie Avenue, south of 28th Street, long after she was supposed to have been taken by gypsies. Lieutenant Costello tasked detectives with finding the man. A previous sighting of Elsie had her walking toward the canal on South Troy Street, a half block south of her aunt's house. If the unknown man was telling the truth, Elsie had been only three blocks away from the bridge. Costello had his own thoughts about the case. He disagreed with the coroner's report and had become convinced that Elsie's death was an accident. She had simply fallen into the canal and died and if he could prove that she was closer to the canal than was previously thought, it would give more weight to this theory. The problem was that Inspector Healey had repeatedly dragged the ditches and canals during the search and her body was not found. In addition, there had been no water in her lungs and she had been molested. Costello was clinging to the initial examination by Dr. Kingston, who told Costello that Elsie had drowned and there were no marks of abuse on her body. He changed his report the following day, but Costello was convinced the first report was accurate.

Costello followed his leads – which led nowhere – while other detectives chased suspects of their own. At one point, they surrounded a house near Madison and Robey Streets and then conducted a house to house search on the southwest side for a former boarder in the Paroubek home. They also looked for the unknown witness who passed on information to Frank and the anonymous letter writer who seemed to know more than he should. Unfortunately, none of these men – like Elsie's killer himself – were ever found. After more than a century, we still don't know what really happened to little Elsie Paroubek.

The same cannot be said for her parents, who were destroyed by their daughter's death. Two years later, on the anniversary of Elsie's funeral in 1913, Frank Paroubek died. He was only forty-five years old. Karolina lived until December 9, 1927. In death, they have been reunited. All three of them are buried together in Chicago's Bohemian National Cemetery, leaving a haunting mystery in their wake.

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**Thursday, November 20, 2014**

## STEALING LINCOLN'S BONES

### The Plot to Steal the Body of Abraham Lincoln

On November 20, 1876, a special grand jury convened in Springfield, Illinois and returned a bill against two men, Terence Mullen and Jack Hughes, for attempted larceny and conspiring to commit an unlawful act. The charges angered many people, but there was simply nothing worse that the men could be charged with. You see, grave robbery was not a crime in Illinois at that time, no matter how famous the grave was that the two men had attempted to rob. They could not be charged with stealing the famous bones in the coffin – but only for planning to steal the coffin itself. You see, the famous bones that they attempted to make off with belonged to President Abraham Lincoln!

After Lincoln had been assassinated in 1865, his body traveled west from Washington, spending several weeks visiting towns and cities along a circuitous route. His funeral service in Springfield did not take place until May 4 and it followed a parade route from the former Lincoln home to Oak Ridge Cemetery, on the far edge of the city. Oak Ridge Cemetery had been started in Springfield around 1860 and mostly consisted of woods and unbroken forest. In fact, not until after Lincoln was buried there was much done in the way of improvement, adding roads, iron gates and a caretaker's residence. Lincoln himself had chosen the rural graveyard as his final resting place, a fact that city leaders initially balked out. However, pressure from his high-strung widow eventually forced them to go along with his wishes.



Lincoln was placed in a temporary receiving vault in the cemetery with his sons, Willie, who had died during the presidency, and Eddie, who had died many years before. Willie's body had accompanied his father's from Washington, while Eddie's had been exhumed and brought over from another cemetery. A short time later, a temporary vault was built for Lincoln and on December 21, he was placed inside. Six of Lincoln's friends wanted to be sure the body was safe, so a plumber's assistant named Leon P. Hopkins made an opening in the lead box for them to peer inside. All was well and Lincoln and his sons were allowed a temporary rest. Hopkins stated in a newspaper story of the time, "I was the last man to look upon the face of Abraham Lincoln." Of course, he had no idea at the time just how many others would look upon the president's face in the years to come.

Construction on a permanent tomb for Lincoln lasted more than five years and on September 19, 1871, the caskets of Lincoln and his sons were removed from the hillside crypt and taken to the catacomb of the new tomb. The plumber, Leon P. Hopkins, opened the coffin once

still remain. The strangest are perhaps these: does the body of Abraham Lincoln really lie beneath the concrete in the catacomb? Or was the last visit from Robert Lincoln part of some elaborate ruse to throw off any further attempts to steal the president's body? And did, as some rumors have suggested, Robert arrange with the Guard of Honor to have his father's body hidden in a different location entirely?

Most historians would agree that Lincoln's body is safely encased in the concrete of the crypt, but rumors persist. Some might ask whose word we have for the fact that Lincoln's body is where it is said to be. We only have the statement of Lincoln's son, Robert, his friends and of course, the Guard of Honor. But weren't these the same individuals who allowed visitors to the monument to grieve before an empty sarcophagus, while the president's body was actually hidden in the labyrinth, beneath a few inches of dirt?

I don't think we will ever really know for sure.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:00 AM No comments:

**Thursday, February 20, 2014**

**The Death of Willie Lincoln, or Seances in the White House**

The Civil War took a terrible toll on Abraham Lincoln but there is no doubt that the most crippling blow that he suffered in the White House was the death of his son, Willie, on February 20, 1862. Lincoln and his wife, Mary, grieved deeply over Willie's death. Their son Eddie had passed away a number of years before and while they didn't know it at the time, another son, Tad, would only live to be age eighteen. Robert was the only Lincoln son to see adulthood. Lincoln was sick at heart over Willie's death and it was probably the most intense personal crisis in his life. Some historians have even called it the greatest blow he ever suffered. Even Confederate President Jefferson Davis sent a letter to Washington to express his condolences over the boy's death.

Seemingly beyond all hope of comfort, Mary Lincoln turned to the one of the most popular movements in America at the time – Spiritualism, which offered communication with the dead. She began to hold séances in the White House and communed with her dead son. And according to others in attendance, so did President Lincoln.

In the midst of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln suffered greatly. Exhausted, he prowled the White House corridors at night, visiting the War Room and reeling under the great responsibility that he felt sending thousands of young men to their deaths. Perhaps his greatest solace during those times was his cherished sons, Willie and Tad. As the war dragged on, Lincoln found them to be one of his only antidotes to the depression and anxiety of his position. He treasured the moments that he could spend with them, when he could forget about the bumbling generals and the bickering politicians and relax with his sons, reading them stories and sharing their wild fun and antics. He loved to beleaguer his visitors with tales of his "two little codgers" and bragged about them to all who would listen.



***This mezzotint print of the Lincoln family in 1861 produced by New York engraver John Chester Buttre in 1873. It was based on a composite portrait by New York artist, Francis B. Carpenter. Carpenter relied on a photograph taken at Mathew Brady's Washington studio on February 9, 1864, for his representation of President Lincoln and Tad. The images of Mary Todd, Willie, and Robert Lincoln are his own creation.***

Both Willie and Tad found the White House to be a place of constant revelry and Lincoln let them run wild with very few restraints. They ran and shouted in the corridors and burst into Lincoln's office in the middle of conferences, chasing one another through the room and darting in between stiff politicians who were not amused. Tad, who instigated most of the mischief, once fired his toy cannon at a Cabinet meeting and also liked to stand at the front of the grand staircase and collect a nickel "entrance fee" from those who came to see the President. Also, with Lincoln's help, the boys converted the White House lawn into a zoo, with animals consisting of ponies, kittens, white rabbits, a turkey, a pet goat (which often slept in Tad's bed) and a dog named Jip, who had a habit of sleeping in Lincoln's lap during meals. When the boys were not chasing animals through the Executive Mansion, they were holding fairs and minstrel shows in the attic. One day, Tad discovered the White House bell system, which had cords running to various rooms so that Lincoln or the staff could summon servants whenever they needed anything. Tad set all of the bells clanging at once, sending the White House into bedlam. It took a few minutes for them to figure out what was going on, but eventually members of the staff climbed into the attic and found Tad yanking all of the bells and giggling madly.

Inspired by the martial atmosphere in Washington, the boys waged mock battles with neighborhood children on the White House lawn. They also held military parades through the corridors of the house, with the boys and their friends marching in a single line, blowing on old horns and banging tin drums. They carried out secret missions on the White House roof, hiding out and watching for "rebs" with their telescopes.

On another occasion, they held a solemn court martial for a soldier doll named Jack, found him guilty, shot him for desertion and buried him in the White House garden. One day, though, they burst into Lincoln's office during a meeting and explained in a breathless voice that they had shot Jack for desertion and buried him but that the White House gardener wanted the doll removed because they had dug up some roses. So, they wanted "Paw" to fix up a pardon for Jack. Lincoln said that he reckoned that he could do that and took out a piece of official stationary. "The Doll Jack is pardoned by order of the President" and signed it "A. Lincoln."



***President Lincoln with his son, Tad***

Because the boys loved the Army, Lincoln often took them along when he went to visit General George McClellan's camps across the Potomac. They looked up to the soldiers with wide-eyed reverence and watched the marching bands and the drilling regiments in awe. When Lincoln was presented to the troops, the boys rode with him in his carriage and tipped their hats to the troops just as their father did.

In spite of how it sounds, though, life for the Lincoln boys was not all play. Tad was a nervous boy, like his mother, and a hyperactive child with a speech impediment. He was slow to learn and many did not believe that he could read. Mary hired tutors for the boys but Tad had "no opinion of discipline" and teacher after teacher resigned in frustration. But Lincoln refused to worry about Tad, insisting that he would learn his letters over time. The boys might be a little spoiled but he was determined to let them have as much fun as they could. They would have to grow up far too soon.



***Willie Lincoln***

In contrast to Tad, Willie had a very serious side and often behaved like an adult. He had turned eleven in December 1861 and many of the Lincoln's friends and staff members commented on his precociousness. The young man would sit in church, listening to the minister with rapt attention while Tad played with a jackknife on the floor of his mother's pew. When he was tired of romping with this younger brother, Willie liked to lock himself in Mary's room, where he would curl up in a chair and read a book or write stories on a writing pad, just as his father used to do when he was growing up. He also kept scrapbooks about historical and significant events, filled with clippings on his father's inauguration, the war, and deaths of important people. Willie was much like his father in so many ways and because of this, was his father's special favorite. He and Willie shared many interests, especially reading, humor and a love for animals. Lincoln had bought Willie a pony for his birthday and it became the pride of the boy's life. Mary loved Willie's gentleness and he was so affectionate that she often counted on him desperately for family companionship. He would, she prayed, "be the hope and stay of her old age."

Tragically, this was not meant to be.

By spring of 1862, the tide of the war was slowly starting to turn for the Union. Lincoln's generals were finally starting to triumph on the battlefield. Buell had actually managed to defeat the rebels in a battle in eastern Kentucky and Halleck had finally come alive and had sent a column down the Tennessee River. Neither man was cooperating as Lincoln had

directed but at least they were fighting. Even better news soon followed. A Brigadier General named Ulysses S. Grant had driven into northwestern Tennessee and had captured Fort Henry on the Tennessee River and then had stormed Fort Donelson on the Cumberland. He pounded the garrison until it met his terms of unconditional surrender. Lincoln and Stanton congratulated one another when they read the news and Lincoln noted happily that Grant and many of his men hailed from Illinois. Subsequent reports also maintained that Grant's victories had broken the Confederate line in Kentucky and forced the rebels to retreat into Tennessee. Though Halleck, who was sitting behind a desk in St. Louis, claimed most of the credit, Lincoln himself nominated "Unconditional Surrender" Grant for a promotion to major general. After a long and dismal winter, Grant had given the president something to look forward to.

While Grant was busy hammering the river garrisons in Tennessee, both Willie and Tad became sick. The onset of their sickness occurred during the last days of January 1862. The boys were out playing in the show and both developed a fever and a cold. Tad's illness soon passed, but Willie seemed to get worse. He was kept inside for a week and finally put into bed. A doctor was summoned and he assured Mary that the boy would improve, despite the fact that Willie's lungs were congested and he was having trouble breathing. Day after day passed and Willie grew more and more sick. He developed chills and soon his fever spiked out of control. White House secretaries later told of hearing his cries in the night.

The reports of what Willie actually died from vary by account. In the end, it remains a mystery. He was said to have been a delicate child, despite his rough play with his brother and his outdoor activities. Like his brother Eddie, he may have suffered from "consumption" or, according to some accounts; he contracted either an acute malarial infection or typhoid. In either case, the lack of proper sanitation was likely a factor. During this time period, Washington had open sewers and a filthy canal for drinking water. The city garbage was dumped into the water just a short distance from the White House.

Before the boy had taken sick, the Lincolns had planned a large reception with over eight hundred people in attendance. The lavish party included dinner, music and dancing and the invitations had already gone out, leaving Mary no opportunity to cancel. The evening turned out to be a dismal affair for the worried parents as they continually took turns climbing the stairs to check on Willie.

His condition did not improve. The doctor was summoned back and by then, everyone in the household and the offices knew that Willie was seriously ill. More doctors were called in to consult and soon, Willie's illness made the newspapers. The reporters conjectured that he may have contracted bilious fever. One parent stayed with the frightened and sick boy at all times and a nurse came to spell them from one of the local hospitals. After a week of this, Mary was too weak and exhausted to rise from her own bed but Lincoln never left the boy's side, sleeping and eating in a chair next to his bed. All he could do was to bathe Willie's face with a wet cloth and look on helplessly as his son's life slowly slipped away. The doctors had no hope for the child as he grew worse. Soon, Willie's mind wandered and he failed to recognize anyone, including his beloved father.

Death came for Willie on the afternoon of February 20, 1862. Lincoln covered his face and wept in the same manner that he had for his mother many years before. He looked at Willie for a long time, refusing to leave his bed side. “My poor boy,” the President is reported to have said. “He was too good for this earth. God called him home. I know that he is better off in heaven, but then we loved him so. It is hard.... hard to have him die.”

Mary collapsed in convulsions of sobbing and her closest confidante, her black seamstress Lizzie Keckley, led her away to comfort her. The talented Mrs. Keckley, a former slave who previously worked for Mrs. Jefferson Davis, had become an almost constant companion of Mrs. Lincoln after completing her ball gown for the inauguration. She was one of the few people who possessed the patience and strength needed to deal with the high-strung First Lady. Mary trusted her implicitly, confided in her, and called the woman her best living friend. Keckley listened to Mary, sympathized with her and advised her as best she could. She would soon influence Mary greatly when it came to her beliefs in Spiritualism.



***Mary Lincoln’s close friend and confidante, seamstress Lizzie Keckley***

After Willie’s death, it was Lizzie who washed the boy’s body and dressed him in a plain brown suit of clothes for the funeral. She herself had lost her only son and understood Mary’s mother’s pain at the loss of Willie.

President Lincoln was unable to stomach his own loss. He managed to stand after Mary was led away by Lizzie Keckley and stumbled into John Nicolay’s office to share the horrible news. Then, sobbing, he walked to Tad’s room. He sat down with the boy and tried to tell him that Willie would not be able to play with him anymore; that his brother had died. Tad refused to believe it for a time and then he too began to cry.

Orville Browning, Lincoln’s longtime friend from Illinois, and his wife, Elizabeth, immediately came to the White House when they heard the news. Elizabeth stayed with Mary throughout the night and Orville began taking care of funeral arrangements. It was a tragic time in the White House and according to the tradition of the day, the mirrors in the house were covered and the mansion was draped in black. The Lincolns hardly stirred from their rooms. If not for their friends and Lincoln’s most trusted staff, the White House would have come to a standstill.

On February 24, a minister conducted the funeral in the East Room, while Willie lay in a metal coffin in the nearby Green Room. It was said that the boy only appeared to be sleeping as his friends and family passed slowly by him, their faces twisted in grief. Lincoln stood with Robert by his side but Mary did not attend the funeral. She was in such a state of shock that she was unable to leave her room. Most of official Washington was there, including Seward, who wept

openly, Lincoln's Cabinet, dozens of politicians and George McClellan, who was so moved by the President's suffering that he later sent Lincoln a compassionate note expressing his sorrow and thanking him for standing by him during failure after failure on the military front. When the service was concluded, the pallbearers and a group of children from Willie's Sunday school class carried the coffin outside and to the waiting hearse.

The day of the funeral was a stormy one, as if the forces of nature reflected the anguish in the Lincoln's hearts. The procession to the cemetery was several blocks long and it ended at Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown. Throughout the day, rainstorms wreaked destruction upon the city. Steeples had fallen from churches, roofs had been torn form houses, trees and debris littered the roadways, and even the funeral procession cowered under the torrents of rain. But as soon as they reached the cemetery, the storm passed over and the air became silent, almost as in deference to Willie Lincoln.

The service was short. Willie had been embalmed to make the trip back to Springfield and be buried beside his brother, but Lincoln changed his mind about that at the last minute. He accepted an offer made to him by a friend, William Thomas Carroll, to place the body of Willie in one of the crypts in the Carroll family tomb. This would be until Lincoln retired from the presidency and returned to live in Springfield himself. He could not bear the idea of having Willie so far away from him just yet.

In fact, Lincoln returned to the cemetery the next day to watch the body as it was moved from the cemetery chapel to the crypt itself. The tomb was located in a remote area of the cemetery and was built into the side of a hill. It was a beautiful and peaceful spot, but Lincoln wouldn't be able to leave his son unattended there for long.

Word spread that Lincoln returned to the tomb on two occasions and had Willie's coffin opened. The undertaker had embalmed Willie so perfectly that he appeared to be merely asleep. The President claimed each time that he opened the casket that he wanted to look upon his boy's face just one last time.

After the funeral, Lincoln tried to go on about his work, but his spirit had been crushed by Willie's death. One week after the funeral, he closed himself up in his office all day and wept. It has often been said that Lincoln was on the verge of suicide at this point, but none can say for sure. He did withdraw even further into himself though and he began to look more closely at the spiritual matters that had interested him for so long.

Although many Lincoln scholars dismiss, or openly scoff, at the idea, it is not only likely that Abraham Lincoln believed in the supernatural, but that he actually participated in it through séances and attempts to contact the spirit world. Many have ignored this part of Lincoln's life or have said that Lincoln had no time for ghosts and spirits, but there are others who say that he actually attended séances, which were held in the White House. Whether he accepted the idea of spirit communication or not, it is a fact that many Spiritualists were often guests there.

After Willie died, Lincoln treasured small items and drawings given to him by his son,

sometimes putting them all over his desk while he worked, hoping to capture his essence. Small toys that had belonged to Willie were placed on his fireplace mantel, along with a framed picture that Willie had done for his father. Lincoln would tell visitors that it had been painted by “my boy, who died.” His friends stated that Lincoln would often watch the door while he worked, as if expecting the boy to run through it and give his father a hug, as he often did in life. One afternoon, he asked Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, “Do you ever find yourself talking with the dead? I do... ever since Willie’s death. I catch myself involuntarily talking to him as if he were near me..... And I feel that he is!”

Willie’s death left a permanent hole in Lincoln’s heart. Often he would dream that Willie was still alive and would see the boy playing in the leaves on the White House lawn and calling out to him --- only to awaken in his darkened bedroom and realize that it was only a dream.

Lincoln also began to speak of how Willie’s spirit remained with him and how his presence was often felt in his home and office. Some mediums theorized that Lincoln’s obsession with the boy’s death may have caused Willie’s spirit to linger behind, refusing, for his father’s sake, to pass on to the other side.

Even if Lincoln did become involved with Spiritualism, as so many have claimed, he largely avoided them in public. However, after Willie’s death, Mary embraced them openly. This is not surprising with the atmosphere that existed in the White House at that time. The President managed to escape from his despair with work, even though his moments with Mary and Tad tended to bring back his pain again. Tad, who until his brother’s death thought life was nothing more than a game, now broke into bouts of crying because Willie “will never speak to me anymore.” But it was Mary who seemed to be more affected by her son’s death. Always high-strung and emotional in the best of times, she suffered what was likely a nervous breakdown and she shut herself in her room for three months. She took to her bed, broke into fits of weeping and begged Willie to come back to her. Lizzie Keckley would later recall how tender President Lincoln was with his anguished wife but he worried about her as well, fearful that she would lapse into insanity. One day, he took her to the window of her room and pointed out to a distant structure where mental patients were confined. “Try and control your grief,” he told her, “or it will drive you mad and we may have to send you there.”

With care from her husband, and Lizzie’s friendship and kindness, Mary began to slowly improve, although the mention of Willie’s name or a reminder of him would send her into violent sobs. Unable to bear any memory, she gave away all of his toys and anything that might make her think of him. She never again entered the guest room where he died or into the Green Room where he had been laid out in his coffin. She canceled all but the most important social functions and lived in veritable seclusion for some time, trying anxiously to hold on. Five months after her son’s death, she was still so shaken that she could barely write to her friends in Springfield about “our crushing bereavement”. Sometimes, she wrote, when she was alone, she realized again that “he is not with us” and the terror of the thought “often for days overcomes me”.

As time wore on, Mary began to find small ways to alleviate her grief. Following Lizzie

Keckley's advice, she began visiting the military hospitals in Washington, distributing food and flowers to the wounded soldiers. She also developed a deep compassion, thanks to her own suffering and her friendship for Lizzie Keckley, for all of the "oppressed colored people". She helped Lizzie to care for "contraband" blacks who were now streaming into Washington and even convinced President Lincoln to donate $200 to her cause because "humanity requires it". Mary also did everything that she could to find jobs for the refugees.

All of this did only so much to ease her pain, though, and Mary remained unstable. Her mood swings, headaches and explosive temper were worse than ever. In addition, she began to see political conspiracies against her husband everywhere, especially on the part of William Seward, the "dirty sneak" who had tried, and was still trying, to take her husband's job. She despised the man and hated him even more for the fact that he cheerfully ignored her hatred for him. She believed that all of the Cabinet members were evil and was bothered by the fact that her husband seemed to be so unaware of it. Mary also fretted about his safety, begging Lincoln to take guards along when he went out on his nocturnal walks to the War Department. She begged him to be careful and worried about him so much that it seemed to Lizzie that Mary "read impending danger in every rustling leaf, in every whisper of the wind."

Perhaps the only thing that really provided Mary with any comfort at all was her embrace of Spiritualism, a movement that claimed contact with the dead and which had enjoyed a revival during the years of carnage during the Civil War. But this period did not mark the Lincolns first exposure to Spiritualism or contact with the dead. By the summer of 1862, Mary was meeting with a number of different Spiritualist mediums and invited many to the White House, as each claimed to be able to "lift the thin veil" and allow Mary to communicate with Willie.

Through Lizzie Keckley, Mary made the acquaintance of a Miss Bonpoint, a journalist who was writing about Spiritualism in the papers. It was she who introduced Mary to the Lauries, a husband and wife medium team that lived in Georgetown. After that, the black presidential carriage was often seen outside of the Lauries' brownstone.



***Nettie Colburn Maynard***

Later that year, Mary met the woman who became her closest Spiritualist companion, Nettie Colburn Maynard, a medium that President Lincoln also met with. Many are familiar with a tale told about a séance attended by Nettie Maynard in 1863 where a grand piano levitated. A medium was playing the instrument when it began to rise off the floor. Lincoln and Colonel Simon Kase were both present and it is said that both men climbed onto the piano, only to have it jump and shake so hard that they climbed down. It is recorded that Lincoln would later refer to the levitation as proof of an "invisible power."

Rumors spread that Lincoln had an interest in the spirit world. In England, a piece of sheet

music was published which portrayed him holding a candle while violins and tambourines flew about his head. The piece of music was called “The Dark Séance Polka” and the caption below the illustration of the president read “Abraham Lincoln and the Spiritualists.”

It was also rumored that Lincoln consulted with these mediums and clairvoyants to obtain information about future events in the war. He found that sometimes they gave him information about matters as mundane as Confederate troop movements -- information that sometimes matched his own precognitive visions. There is much written about Lincoln and the Washington Spiritualists of the day in the accounts and diaries written by friends and acquaintances. One such acquaintance would even claim that Lincoln’s plans for the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the southern slaves, came to him from the spirit of Daniel Webster and other abolitionists of the spirit world.

Although a number of prominent Washington City Spiritualists wrote of their experiences with President Lincoln, most of the information about his interest in Spiritualism came from Nettie Colburn Maynard, who published a manuscript on the subject in 1891. According to Nettie, she first met President Lincoln on February 5, 1863, during a séance in Georgetown that he was not scheduled to attend. The medium would later claim that her “spirit guide” told her that Lincoln would be in attendance. The host of the party declared that this was unlikely to happen, as Lincoln rarely attended séances away from the White House. To his surprise, though, the President did come and the host exclaimed upon seeing him that he had been expected. Lincoln was reportedly shocked and stated that he had not been planning to come but only accompanied Mary that night on a whim.

During the séance, Lincoln was allegedly contacted by an “old Dr. Bramford”, who is said to have given him information about the state of the war. Nettie later quoted the spirit as saying, “a very precarious state of things existed at the front, where General Hooker had just taken command. The army was totally demoralized; regiments stacking arms, refusing to obey orders and do duty; threatening a general retreat; declaring their purpose to return to Washington.” She wrote that the vivid picture of this terrible state of affairs seemed to surprise everyone but Lincoln, who spoke up to the spirit. “You seem to understand the situation,” he said. “Can you point out the remedy?”

Dr. Bramford replied that he had one, but only if Lincoln had the courage to use it. The President smiled and challenged the eerie voice that was coming to him from the darkness. According to the spirit, the remedy for success lay with Lincoln himself. He spoke: “Go in person to the front; taking with you your wife and children; leaving behind your official dignity, and all manner of display. Resist the importunities of officials to accompany you and take only such attendants as may be absolutely necessary; avoid the high grade officers, and seek the tents of the private soldiers. Inquire into their grievances; show yourself to be what you are -- ‘The Father of Your People’. Make them feel you are interested in their sufferings, and that you are not unmindful of the many trials which beset them in their march through the dismal swamps, whereby both their courage and numbers have been depleted.”

Lincoln is said to have replied that if this would do the soldiers good, that such a thing was

easily done. The mysterious voice explained that it would do all that was required to unite the soldiers again. In April, Lincoln paid the Army of the Potomac a lengthy visit, arriving at Aquia Creek and traveling by train to Falmouth where Hooker's men were camped. From there, Lincoln could see with a spy glass across the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, where Robert E. Lee's Army of Virginia waited, less than a half mile away. A short time later, the overconfident Hooker led the Union to one of the costliest defeats of the war at Chancellorsville. In the midst of this disaster, though, his men followed him bravely into battle. It was believed that their courage had been restored by the visit from President Lincoln.

Nettie Maynard later recalled that after the advice given by Dr. Bramford, the spirit and the President continued to speak about the state of affairs in regards to the war. The spirit also told him that "he would be re-nominated and re-elected to the Presidency." This was more unusual than most modern readers might believe because, at that point in history, no President had ever been elected to a second term. Lincoln was not shocked by the news. He smiled sadly, however, and said, "It is hardly an honor to be coveted, save one could find it his duty to accept it."

It was during this very séance that the famous incident with the levitating piano took place. The medium said to have performed this wonder was Mrs. Belle Miller, a prominent Washington Spiritualist. Mrs. Miller was playing the piano and under her influence, it "rose and fell", keeping time to her touch in a regular manner. One of those present suggested that, as an added test of the invisible power causing the instrument to move, Belle should place her hand on the piano and stand at an arm's length from it. This would show that she was in no way connected to it except as an agent of the mysterious power. President Lincoln then placed his hand underneath the piano, at the end that was closest to Mrs. Miller, who placed her hand upon his to demonstrate that neither strength nor pressure was being used. In this position, the piano rose and fell a number of times, seemingly at their bidding. Lincoln even changed places to stand on the other side of the piano, but the same thing continued to happen.

The President was reported to have grinned at the display and said that he believed he could hold the instrument to the floor. He climbed up onto it, sitting with his long legs dangling over the side, as did a Mr. Somes, Colonel Simon Kase and a Federal Army officer. The piano, ignoring the enormous weight now upon it, continued to wobble up and down until the sitters were obliged to "vacate the premises".

The audience was, by this time, satisfied to the fact that no mechanical means had been used to move the instrument and Lincoln himself declared that he was sure the motion was caused by some "invisible power".

Mr. Somes spoke up, "Mr. President, when I have related to my acquaintances that which I have experienced tonight, they will say, with a knowing look and a wise demeanor, 'you were psychologized and as a matter of fact, you did not see what you in reality did see.'"

"You should bring that person here," Lincoln quietly replied, "and when the piano seems to

more and the same six friends peered again at the president's face. There were several crypts waiting for Lincoln and his sons, although one of them had already been filled. Tad Lincoln had died in Chicago a short time before and his body had already been placed in the nearly finished monument.

On October 9, 1874, Lincoln was moved again. This time, his body was placed inside a marble sarcophagus, which had been placed in the center of the semi-circular catacomb. A few days later, the monument was finally dedicated. The citizens of Springfield seemed content with the final resting place of their beloved Abraham Lincoln. But then a threat arose from a direction that no one could have ever predicted – a plot to steal the body and hold it for ransom! This event became one of the strangest stories in the annals of Illinois crime.

The events began with the arrest of Benjamin Boyd, a petty criminal who had, by 1875, established himself as one of the most skilled engravers of counterfeit currency plates in the country. Boyd had been doggedly pursued by Captain Patrick D. Tyrell of the Chicago office of the U.S. Secret Service for eight months before he was finally captured in Fulton, Illinois, on October 20. Following his trial, Boyd was sentenced to a term of ten years at the Joliet Penitentiary.

Shortly after Boyd's arrest, the strange events concerning the body of Abraham Lincoln began in Lincoln, Illinois. The city was a staging point for a successful gang of counterfeiters run by James "Big Jim" Kneally. The place was an ideal refuge for Kneally's "shovers," pleasant-looking fellows who traveled around the country and passed, or "shoved," bogus money to merchants. Following Boyd's arrest, in the spring of 1876, business took a downturn for the Kneally Gang. With their master engraver in prison, the gang's supply of money was dwindling fast. Things were looking desperate when Kneally seized on a gruesome plan. He would have his men kidnap a famous person and for a ransom, negotiate for the release of Benjamin Boyd from Joliet prison. Kneally found the perfect candidate as his kidnapping victim: Abraham Lincoln, or at least his famous corpse.

Kneally placed Thomas J. Sharp in charge of assembling the gang and leading the operation. Sharp was the editor of the local Sharp's Daily Statesman newspaper and a valued member of the counterfeiting gang. Meanwhile, Kneally returned to St. Louis, where he owned a legitimate livery business, so that he could be far away from suspicion as events unfolded and have an airtight alibi. In June, the plan was hammered together at Robert Splain's saloon in Lincoln. Five of the gang members were sent to Springfield to open a saloon that could be used as a base of operations.

This new place was soon established as a tavern and dance hall on Jefferson Street, the site of Springfield's infamous Levee District, a lawless section of town where all manner of vice flourished. Splain served as the bartender while the rest of the gang loitered there as customers. They made frequent visits to the Lincoln Tomb at Oak Ridge, where they found the custodian, John C. Power, more than happy to answer questions about the building. On one occasion, he innocently let slip that there was no guard at the tomb during the night. This clinched the last details of the plan, which involved stealing the body and spiriting it away out

rise, have him slip his foot under the leg and be convinced by the weight of the evidence resting upon his understanding."

His sly comment brought a wave of laughter to the room but when the chuckles died down, the President wearily sank into an armchair, "the old, tired, anxious look returning to his face."

Nettie Maynard held a number of séances with the Lincolns during the latter days of February and early March 1863. The séances all took place by appointment and after the close of each session, Mary made another appointment to come at a certain hour of another day, usually around the time that the President took his lunch in the afternoon.

On one occasion, Nettie was summoned to a séance by Mr. Somes, who told her that the meeting was of such a private nature that he was not at liberty to say more. Somes picked her up in a carriage that evening and informed her that her destination was the White House. He explained that while at the War Department that afternoon, he had met President Lincoln coming from Secretary Stanton's office. Somes spoke to him briefly and Lincoln asked him if he knew whether or not Nettie was in the city and if so, would it be possible for her to visit the White House that night. When Somes told him that Nettie was indeed in Washington, Lincoln asked that she come that evening, but that the matter should be kept confidential.

By the time that Somes had finished explaining what had occurred, the carriage had arrived at the White House. A waiting servant ushered them inside and they were hurried up to the President's office, where Lincoln and two other men were waiting. The President sent the servant out of the room and a few moments later, Mary entered the chamber. Lincoln told Nettie that he wished for her to give the visitors an opportunity to witness something of her "rare gift" and he added that "you need not be afraid, as these friends have seen something of this before."

Nettie described the men as being military officers, although their coats had been buttoned to conceal any insignia or mark of rank. One of the men was tall and heavily built, with auburn hair and dark eyes. He had thick side whiskers and carried himself like a soldier. The other man was of average height and she had the impression that he was of a lesser rank than his companion. He had light brown hair and blue eyes and was quick in manner but deferential towards his companion.

The group sat quietly for a few moments and then Nettie entered a trance. One hour later, she became conscious of her surroundings and was standing at a table upon which was a large map of the Southern states. She held a lead pencil in her hand and Lincoln and the two men were standing close to her, bending over the map. The younger man was looking curiously and intently at her.
"It is astonishing," Mr. Lincoln was saying to the larger of the soldiers, "how every line she has drawn conforms to the plan agreed upon."

"Yes," answered the other man. "It is astonishing."

Looking up, both of the men saw that she was awake and they instantly stepped back. Lincoln took the pencil from Nettie's hand and eased her into a nearby chair. Mary soon appeared at her side to offer some comfort.

"Was everything satisfactory?" Somes asked the assembled men.

"Perfectly", Lincoln replied. "Miss Nettie does not seem to require eyes to do anything."

Shortly after, the conversation turned to more mundane matters and after a brief time, the military men took their leave and then it came the President's time to depart. He carefully shook Nettie's small hand and said to her in a low voice: "It is best not to mention this meeting at the present."
This was the last time that the private séance was ever mentioned and Nettie never learned the identity of the two men who were with President Lincoln that night --- or just what the spirits may have revealed with the map of the Confederacy.

According to accounts, Nettie Maynard's contact with the next world was said to have brought relief to Lincoln on more than one occasion. She was at the White House to visit Mrs. Lincoln in May 1863, around the time that the battle of Chancellorsville was being fought. Nettie was brought into Mary's bedroom and found the First Lady wearing only her dressing gown. Her hair was loose and she was pacing back and forth in a distracted manner. "Oh Miss Nettie," Mary cried, "such dreadful news; they are fighting at the front; such terrible slaughter; and all our generals are killed and our army is in full retreat; such is the latest news. Oh, I am glad you have come. Will you sit down a few moments and see if you can get anything from the beyond?"

As no news of the battle had yet reached the public, Nettie was surprised by what she heard. She put her things aside and sat down with Mary to let her "spirit guide" take control of her. In a few moments, she was able to reassure Mary that her fears were groundless. A great battle was being fought but the Union forces were holding their own and while many thousands had been killed, none of the generals, as she had been informed, were slain or injured. She would, Nettie assured her, receive better news by nightfall.

This calmed Mary somewhat but when President Lincoln entered the room a short time later, it was obvious that he was still anxiously worrying about what was occurring at the front lines. He greeted Nettie with little enthusiasm but Mary insisted that he listen to what the medium had to say. Lincoln listened attentively to what had been passed on from Nettie's "spirit guide", recounting the true conditions at the front and assuring him of the good news that he would receive before nightfall. The battle would be costly, the spirits said, but not disastrous, and though not decisive in any way, it would not be a loss to the Union cause. Lincoln brightened visibly under the assurances that he was given and he later learned that Nettie's information had been correct. Chancellorsville resulted in the lives of many men lost and effectively ended the career of General Joseph Hooker but no real ground was lost by the Union. Hooker had marched into a Confederate controlled area and his outnumbered army was sent into retreat but regrouped to fight another day.

Perhaps the most notorious White House séance attendee, who also had an encounter with Nettie Maynard, was General Daniel Sickles. The colorful and controversial politician and Civil War officer spent nearly three months in Washington in the summer of 1862 and became well acquainted with the Lincolns. Sickle was an unusual man and as an antebellum New York politician, was involved in a number of public scandals, most notably the killing of his wife's lover, Philip Barton Key, son of Francis Scott Key. Sickles was acquitted with the first use of temporary insanity as a legal defense in American history. He became one of the most prominent political generals of the Civil War and at the battle of Gettysburg; he insubordinately moved his troops to a position in which it was virtually destroyed. His combat career ended at Gettysburg when he lost a leg to cannon fire.



***Daniel Sickles***

Sickles was interested in Spiritualism before the war. In fact, on the night that he learned that his wife was cheating on him with the handsome widower Phillip Barton Key (February 24, 1859), Mr. and Mrs. Sickles had given a dinner party at their Washington home that was enlivened by the presence of the Scottish wife of New York Herald editor James Gordon Bennett, an ardent Spiritualist. Mrs. Bennett had attended many séances in Washington and spoke openly of them.

A few years later, during the summer after Willie Lincoln's death, Sickles often joined Mary at séances in the city. He returned to Washington after losing his leg at Gettysburg and continued the regular visitations. In fact, in early 1864, Sickles concocted a ruse to test the mediumistic powers of Mary's young medium, Nettie Maynard. Mary agreed to go along with the ruse, perhaps to teach a lesson to the arrogant general.

Nettie had recently returned to Washington after a brief absence and was living at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Somes. Nettie soon called at the White House, to pay her respects to the President and the First Lady, and was warmly received. Lincoln expressed the hope that she had come to Washington to spend the rest of the winter.

A few days later, Nettie and the Someses were invited back to meet a friend – Daniel Sickles in a disguise. Mrs. Lincoln, in her invitation to Nettie, mentioned her desire to see if Nettie's "spirit guide" would be able to tell who the friend was.

The party arrived at half past eight and was welcomed by the First Lady, who introduced them to a distinguished, soldierly gentleman, who was wrapped in a long cloak, completely concealing his person. Mrs. Lincoln did not call him by name, apologizing for not doing so, and explaining that she wanted to see if her spirit friends could recognize him. She promised to present him afterward. Mr. Somes recognized Sickles immediately, but gave no hint of the general's identity.

President Lincoln had a late-night cabinet meeting and after joining the group, asked that the proceedings be brief. Silence fell on the group and Nettie entered into a trance. The spirits that spoke through her turned all of their attentions on Lincoln. Their remarks related to the condition of free black people in Washington, declaring that their condition was deplorable – half fed and half clothed – and that the manner of their existence should be an embarrassment to the country. The spirits called on Lincoln to form a special committee to investigate the condition of their people, and to organize a bureau to control and regulate the affairs of the freedmen. (The bureau was eventually formed in March 1865)

It was only after this communication that the spirit, through Nettie, turned to Sickles and referred to him as “General” and praised him for the “noble sacrifice” of his leg at Gettysburg. A few moments later, another presence took control of Nettie – her usual “spirit guide”, an Indian maiden – and she turned to Sickles and addressed him as “Crooked Knife”, her Native American name for him, which was close enough to “Sickles” that everyone present was satisfied.

After Lincoln hurried off to his meeting and Nettie awoke, Mary made the promised presentation of General Sickles, who put aside the cloak, revealing his uniform and concealed crutch. Sickles had no choice but to confess that he was impressed with Mary’s young medium.

As time and the war marched on, Lincoln came to believe that a portent of doom hung over his head. The constant threats of death and violence that he received kept his personal bodyguards on edge at all times. It is also believed that some of his Spiritualist friends felt the end was near.

During the winter of 1864 and 1865, though, the war was nearing its end. In February 1865, Washington was filled to capacity with people who had come to witness the second inauguration of President Lincoln and Nettie Maynard received a dispatch from home, informing her that her father had taken ill. She was asked to come home at once. Having an appointment to meet with Mary soon after, she made a trip to the White House to tell her that she had to leave town. Mary was out, so Nettie proceeded upstairs to have a word with the President instead.

It was the early part of the afternoon, and during the last days of the expiring Congress, and the waiting room was filled with members of both Houses, all anxious to get a word with the President. Nettie soon became doubtful that she would obtain any time with Mr. Lincoln, especially in light of the fact that many of the prominent men had been waiting for several hours. Edward, Lincoln’s devoted usher, was walking back and forth and collecting calling cards to take into the President and Nettie called him over. She explained that she needed only a brief moment with Lincoln and asked for any opportunity to tell him why she would have to cancel her appointment the following week.

Half an hour went by and Edward appeared and asked Nettie to follow him. Several of the

senators that Nettie knew personally laughed to her and asked with a smile that she put in a good word for them. She was soon in the presence of the President. He stood at his desk, looking over some papers but laid them down and greeted her with a genial smile. In as few words as possible, knowing how precious his time was, she informed him of her unusual call and told him that she had been summoned out of town because her father was seriously ill. Lincoln looked at her with a curious smile. “But cannot our friends from the upper country tell you whether his illness is likely to prove fatal or not?”

Nettie replied that she had already consulted with her “friends” and that they had assured her that his treatment was wrong and that her presence was needed to affect a cure.

Lincoln laughed and turned to his secretary. “I didn’t catch her, did I?” he teased Nettie and then seriously added that he was sorry that she would be away during the inauguration.

“I would enjoy it,” she assured him, “but the crowd will be so great that we will not be able to see you, Mr. Lincoln, even if I remain.”

“You could not help it,” he answered, drawing his lean figure to its full height and glancing at her in an amused way. “I will be the tallest man there.”

“That is true, in every sense of the word.”

Lincoln nodded pleasantly at the compliment and then asked Nettie what her “friends” predicted for his future.

“What they predicted for you, Mr. Lincoln, has come to pass and you are to be inaugurated for the second time.” He nodded his head and she continued. “But they also reaffirm that the shadow they have spoken of still hangs over you.”

Lincoln shook his head impatiently. “Yes, I know,” he said quickly. “I have letters from all over the country from your kind of people --- mediums, I mean --- warning me against some dreadful plot against my life. But I don’t think the knife is made, or the bullet run, that will reach it. Besides, nobody wants to harm me.”

A feeling of sadness overwhelmed Nettie. It was a feeling that she could not account for and also one that she could not conceal. She spoke to the President boldly: “Therein lies your danger, Mr. President --- your overconfidence in your fellow men.”

The old melancholy look that Nettie had grown so used to in her time of friendship with the President and his wife descended over his face. His voice was quiet and subdued. “Well, Miss Nettie,” he said, “I shall live until my work is done and no earthly power can prevent it. And then it doesn’t matter so that I am ready and that I ever mean to be.” Then, brightening a little, he extended his hand to her. “Well, I suppose that I must bid you goodbye but we shall hope to see you back again next fall.”

“I shall certainly come,” Nettie told him, “if you are still here.”

With another cordial shake of the President’s hand, Nettie passed out of Lincoln’s presence for the last time. “Never again,” she later wrote, “would we meet his welcome smile.”

Posted by Troy Taylor at 11:16 AM No comments:

**Friday, April 26, 2013**

**The Man who Murdered the Assassin**

**THE MAN WHO MURDERED THE ASSASSIN**
**The Enigmatic Boston Corbett – killer of John Wilkes Booth**

On this date, April 26, 1865, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was surrounded by federal troops in a barn near Port Royal, Virginia and shot to death. Legends persisted for decades – starting almost from the time the fatal shot was fired and continuing to this day --- that Booth was not the man who died in that barn. Allegedly, he lived on for many years, only to eventually die in Enid, Oklahoma… but that’s a story for another time (see my book**INTO THE SHADOWS**).

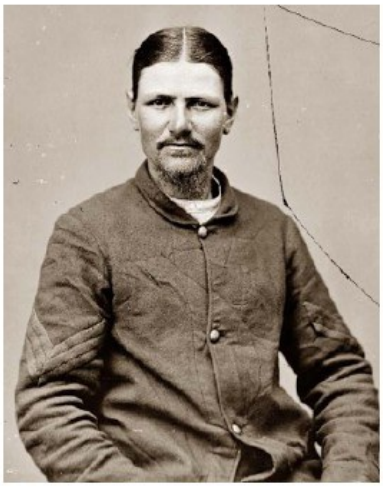
For this anniversary of Booth’s accepted death, we will be taking a closer look at the man who killed him – a very strange gentleman named Boston Corbett, who may have been part of a larger conspiracy himself.

Boston Corbett is largely considered to have been the Jack Ruby of his day – the man who killed the killer of the President of the United States. Jack Ruby’s shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald on November 24, 1963, in the basement of the Dallas, Texas jail was witnessed by reporters, police officers and a national television audience. But Boston Corbett’s shooting of John Wilkes Booth on April 26, 1865, at a tobacco barn near Port Royal, Virginia was hardly witnessed by anyone – and it attracted controversy from the beginning. While he was celebrated for a short time as Booth’s killer, his real place in the Lincoln assassination remains in question after all of these years.

Sergeant Boston Corbett had been assigned to Lieutenant Edward Doherty, one of the Federal officers that had been given the task of tracking down Lincoln’s assassin. The soldiers found several witnesses who recognized Booth and eventually discovered sympathizer Willie Jett, who had arranged lodging for Booth at the tobacco farm where he was later discovered.

**Boston Corbett**

It was Corbett who fired the fatal bullet that killed Booth and it is at this point that many conspiracy theories about him begin. Among the theories is the idea that Corbett was under



different orders than the other soldiers. Some believe he was actually told to silence Booth so that Edwin Stanton could not be implicated in a plot against the president. It is unlikely that this was the case, however, as Corbett is not believed to have had contact with Stanton before leaving Washington. He did act on orders to kill Booth, however, if not orders from government officials, then from a higher authority.

He shot Booth on direct orders from God.

He was born Thomas H. Corbett in London in 1832 and immigrated with his parents to Troy, New York seven years later. As a young man in the 1850s, Corbett went into the hat-making industry at a time when the dire occupational hazards of the trade had yet to be discovered. As he worked, he was exposed to large quantities of mercury, which often caused insanity (thus, the expression “mad as a hatter”). The inescapable inhaling of the vapors from the mercury affected the brain and caused hallucinatory episodes, twitches and tics and outright psychoses and his work as a hat-maker was certainly the root of Boston Corbett’s madness.

He worked in the trade in Troy and Albany, in Richmond, Virginia and in Boston and New York City for several years. He is said to have married during this period, losing his wife and a baby during childbirth. After this tragedy, he became homeless and began drinking. He eventually strayed into religion after attending a revival meeting in New York.

In 1857, while working in Boston, Corbett was baptized, apparently into the Methodist Church, and the experience so moved him that he adopted the name of the city where he found his faith as his own. He was by now a local eccentric. He wore his hair long because images of Jesus showed him with long locks and he preached to any passerby who paused in curiosity.

Corbett’s religious fanaticism, loud but harmless, took a violent turn in the summer of 1858. After a revival meeting at a Boston church, he was propositioned on the street by two prostitutes. The experience so disturbed him that he returned to the boarding house where he lived and castrated himself with a pair of scissors. He was treated at Massachusetts General Hospital from the middle of July to the first weeks in August for his self-inflicted wound.

What happened to Boston Corbett over the course of the next two years is unknown, but at some point, he returned to New York and in April 1861, enlisted as a private in Company I, Twelfth New York Militia. Behavioral problems marred his record from the start. They began when he heard Colonel Butterfield, commander of the militia regiment, using profanity toward his new recruits. Corbett reprimanded the Colonel for using the Lord’s name in vain and for this, was marched off to the guardhouse. A few days later, Butterfield offered to release him if he apologized, but Corbett refused.

Corbett later re-enlisted, this time in Company L, Sixteenth New York Cavalry, where he was

promoted to corporal and later rose to the rank of sergeant. This was in spite of the numerous disciplinary problems that he had over his demand that officers not use profanity and his condemnation of fellow soldiers who drank. New York cavalrymen remembered their odd comrade for his periodic punishment tours where he carried a knapsack filled with bricks around the guardhouse but his commanders saw him as a fierce and resolute fighting man. He fought bravely in battle, although his odd and erratic behavior often made his superiors wary of using him for some assignments.

In June 1864, Confederate raiders under John Singleton Mosby cornered a squad of Union troopers, including Corbett, at Culpepper Courthouse in Virginia. Corbett refused to surrender, found cover and opened fire on Mosby and his twenty-six raiders. He only gave up after his ammunition ran out. Mosby was impressed.

Corbett and his comrades were sent to the notorious Andersonville prison in Georgia and endured five months of incarceration there, three of them in an outdoor compound. He was released during a prisoner exchange in November 1864 and was sent to an Army hospital in Maryland to recover from exposure, malnutrition and scurvy. By the early spring of 1865, Corbett had returned to his unit and in April was the first man to volunteer for service in the pursuit of President Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth.



**John Wilkes Booth**

Corbett was among the men who cornered Booth and David Herold at the Port Royal tobacco barn and he was stationed at a point on the building's perimeter when it was set on fire. Through a gap in the barn's siding, he saw a lone figure inside. He stated at the conspiracy trial one month later that he had never seen Booth before but the man in the barn had a broken leg and made "desperate replies" to the Federal officers who demanded his surrender. He gave a statement on May 1, 1865 that read:

*I saw [Booth] in the act of stooping or springing, and concluded he was going to use his weapons. I immediately took steady aim upon him with my revolver and fired – shooting him through the neck and head. He was then carried out of the barn before the fire reached him; was taken to the Piazza of the house… Lt. Doherty, and the detective officers who were in front of the barn, did not seem to know that I had shot him, but supposed he had shot himself, until I informed Lt. Doherty of the fact – showing him my pistol which bore evidence of the truth of my statement, which also confirmed by the man placed at my right-hand who saw it.*

Corbett's shot was an extraordinary one considering the distance, the weapon, the smoke and fire in the barn and the confusion that was occurring outside of it. The bullet struck the man inside in the back of the head – almost at the same place where Booth's bullet struck Lincoln – and severed his spinal cord.

The assassin was dragged from the burning barn and placed on a mattress from the nearby Garrett house. He was scarcely recognizable as the handsome actor. The man was filthy, his hair in tangles, and eleven-day growth of beard on his emaciated face. He died a few minutes after being taken from the barn.

After the shooting at the farm, Corbett was placed under arrest by Colonel Conger, Doherty's superior officer in the search party. The charge against him was a breach of military discipline "in firing without Doherty's order and in defiance of Gen. Baker's order" and Corbett was placed under guard along with David Herold and returned to Washington. When they arrived, Corbett was imprisoned, awaiting court martial. However, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, upon hearing the story of the incident, ordered Corbett to be released. He announced theatrically, "The rebel is dead, the patriot lives – the patriot is released!"

Corbett mustered out of the Army on August 17, 1865 and moved to Danbury, Connecticut. There, he found work, again in the hat trade, and supplemented his income with occasional lectures, accompanied by lantern slides, on his exploits as "Lincoln's Avenger."

But, was he really? Even those who did not question the idea that the assassin died at the Garrett farm, they did wonder whether or not Corbett actually fired the fatal shot, or whether Booth committed suicide or escaped. Some believed that Colonel Conger fired the shot from the corner of the barn (he received a suspiciously high $15,000 of the combined $75,000 reward offered for Booth and Herold's capture). Others believed that Lieutenant Doherty had done the shooting and pointed out that he received $5,250 of the reward money and was never questioned during the conspirator's trial. Corbett's shot was almost impossible and many believed that he simply could not have done it. In 1903, an early Lincoln assassination researcher, David M. DeWitt, wrote that Corbett was at least thirty feet from the barn when the shot was fired that killed Booth.

In the end, Corbett received $1,653.85 as part of the reward for bringing Booth to justice. His petition for a federal pension for his service in the Army, specifically for his work as a volunteer in the search for Lincoln's assassin, came through in 1882. He was granted $7.50 a month in appreciation for his "service" to the United States.

Corbett eventually gave up work as a hat-maker and showed up in the late 1860s, in Camden, New Jersey, where he worked as a minister. He later went west and ended up in Kansas in the 1870s, showing signs of a deteriorating mental state. He lived as a reclusive farmer for years, occasionally working as a "fire and brimstone" evangelist. In November 1885, he was arrested after threatening some boys playing baseball on the Sabbath with a pistol. The case was dismissed by the county attorney.

A year after this incident, through the efforts of the Grand Army of the Republic and a state legislator from Cloud County, where Corbett lived, he was hired as an assistant doorkeeper at the Kansas House of Representatives in Topeka. He reported for duty in January 1887, but only lasted a month before his insanity got the better of him.

Corbett, in his madness, believed that the other doorkeepers and the politicians were laughing at him behind his back. This led to him threatening a janitor with a knife and then pointing a revolver at the House sergeant-in-arms. He broke into the House gallery with his weapons, causing the lawmakers, staff and workers to flee for their lives. Corbett was quickly arrested and taken before a judge the next day. A quick verdict was pronounced and he was sent to the Topeka Asylum for the Insane.

He failed on his first attempt to escape but on May 26, 1888, he succeeded. Walking around the grounds of the asylum with other inmates that day, Corbett saw a pony that belonged to the young son of the superintendent tied up in front of the hospital office. He hurried over, stole the horse, and rode away.

A week later, with flyers posted about him around the state, Corbett surfaced in Neodesha in the southeastern part of the state. There, he met a local schoolmaster named Richard Thatcher and Irwin Ford, the son of a soldier who had been imprisoned with Corbett at Andersonville. The two men supplied Corbett with a fresh horse, food and money. They said that Corbett told them that he had been “shamefully treated” and intended to flee to Mexico.

He may have done just that, although we’ll never know for sure. He was in good health when he escaped from the hospital and Mexico was the perfect place for him to do just what he did – disappear.

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of town. It would be buried about two miles north of the city, under a Sangamon River bridge, and then the men would scatter and wait for Kneally to negotiate the ransom. They chose the night of July 3, 1876 to carry out their plan.

The Springfield saloon was up and running by the middle of June, leaving the men with several weeks with to do nothing but sit around the tavern, drink, and wait. One night, one of the men got very drunk and spilled the details of the plan to a prostitute, who worked at a nearby "parlor house." He told her to look for a little extra excitement in the city on Independence Day. He and his companions planned to be stealing Lincoln's body while the rest of the city was celebrating the holiday. The story was too good to keep and the woman passed it along to several other people, including the city's Chief of Police, Abner Wilkinson, although no record exists how these two knew one another. The story spread rapidly and Kneally's men disappeared.

Kneally didn't give up on the plan, however. He simply went looking for more competent help. He moved his base of operations to a tavern called the Hub at 294 West Madison Street in Chicago. Kneally's man there was named Terence Mullen and he operated a secret headquarters for the gang in the back room of the tavern. One of Kneally's operatives, Jack Hughes, came into the Hub in August and learned that a big job was in the works. Kneally was anxious to carry out his plan, but balking at stealing a corpse, Hughes and Mullen brought another man into the mix. His name was Jim Morrissey and he had a reputation for being one of the most skilled grave robbers in Chicago. They decided he would be perfect for the job. Unknown to the gang, “Morrissey” was actually a Secret Service operative named Lewis Swegles. He was an undercover agent for Captain Patrick Tyrell and he began posing as a grave robber, claiming to have obtained dozens of cadavers for medical schools.

Swegles, pretending to be “Jim Morrissey,” came into the Hub and discussed the methods of grave robbery with the other two men. The three of them quickly devised a plan. They would approach the Lincoln monument under the cover of night and pry open the marble sarcophagus. They would then place the casket in a wagon and drive northward to the Indiana sand dunes. This area was still remote enough to provide a suitable hiding place for however long was needed. Swegles, being the most experienced of the group, agreed to everything about the plan except for the number of men needed. He believed the actual theft would be harder than they thought and wanted to bring in a famous criminal friend of his to help them. The man's name was Billy Brown and he could handle the wagon while the others pillaged the tomb. The other two men readily agreed.

On November 5, Mullens and Hughes met with Swegles in his Chicago home for a final conference. They agreed the perfect night for the robbery would be the night of the upcoming presidential election. The city would be packed with people and they would be in downtown Springfield very late, waiting near the telegraph and political offices for news. Oak Ridge Cemetery, over two miles away and out in the woods, would be deserted and the men could work for hours and not be disturbed. It would also be a perfect night to carry the body away, as the roads would be crowded with wagons and people returning home from election celebrations. One more wagon would not be noticed.

The men agreed and decided to leave for Springfield on the next evening's train. Swegles promised to have Billy Brown meet them at the train, but felt it was best if he didn't sit with them. He thought that four men might attract too much attention. Hughes and Mullen conceded that this was a good idea, but wanted to at least get a look at Brown. Swegles instructed them to stay in their seats and he would have Brown walk past them to the rear car. As the train was pulling away from the station, a man passed by the two of them and casually nodded his head at them. This was the mysterious fourth man. Brown, after examination, disappeared into the back coach. Hughes and Mullen agreed that he looked fit for the job.

While they were discussing his merits, Billy Brown was hanging onto the back steps of the train and waiting for it to slow down at a crossing on the outskirts of Chicago. At that point, he slipped off the train and headed back into the city. "Billy Brown" was actually Agent Nealy of the United States Secret Service.

As Nealy was slipping off the train, more agents were taking his place. At the same time the conspirators were steaming toward Springfield, Tyrell and half a dozen operatives were riding in a coach just one car ahead of them. They were also joined on the train by a contingent of Pinkerton detectives, who had been hired by Robert Lincoln after he got word of the plot to steal his father's body. The detectives were led by Elmer Washburne, one of Robert Lincoln's law partners.

A plan was formed between Washburne and Tyrell. Swegles would accompany the grave robbers to Springfield and while assisting in the robbery, would signal the detectives, who would be hiding in another part of the monument. They would then capture Mullen and Hughes in the act.

When they arrived in Springfield, Tyrell contacted John Todd Stuart, Robert's cousin and the head of the new Lincoln National Monument Association, which cared for the tomb. He advised Stuart of the plan and together, they contacted the custodian of the site. The detectives would hide in the museum side of the monument with the custodian. This area was called Memorial Hall and it was located on the opposite side of the structure from the catacomb. They would wait there for the signal from Swegles and then they would rush forward and capture the robbers.

The first Pinkerton agent arrived just after nightfall. He carried with him a note for John Power, the custodian, which instructed him to put out the lights and wait for the others to arrive. The two men crouched in the darkness until the other men came inside. Tyrell and his men explored the place with their flashlights. Behind the Memorial Hall was a damp, dark labyrinth that wound through the foundations of the monument to a rear wall of the catacomb, where Lincoln was entombed. Against this wall, in the blackness, Tyrell stationed a detective to wait and listen for sounds of the grave robbers. Tyrell then returned to the Museum Room to wait with the others. Their wait was over as darkness fell outside.

A lantern flashed outside the door and sounds could be heard as the grave robbers worked at the lock. Almost immediately, Mullen broke the saw blade that he was using on the lock and so they settled in while he resorted to the long and tedious task of filing the lock away. After some time, Mullen finally removed the lock and opened the door to the burial chamber. Before them, in the dim light, they saw the marble sarcophagus of President Lincoln. Now, all they had to do was to remove the lid and carry away the coffin, which turned out to be much harder than they had anticipated. The stone was too heavy to move, so using an ax, they broke open the top, then moved the lid aside and looked into it. Swegles was given the lantern and was stationed nearby to illuminate the work area. Left with no other option, he complied, although he was supposed to light a match at the door to alert the Secret Service agents that it was time to act. Meanwhile, Mullen and Hughes lifted out the heavy casket. Once this was completed, Mullen told Swegles to go and have the wagon moved around. He had assured Mullen and Hughes that Billy Brown had it waiting in a ravine below the hill.

Swegles raced around to the Memorial Hall, gave the signal to the detectives, and then ran outside. Tyrell whispered to his men and, with drawn revolvers, they rushed out and around the monument to the catacomb. When they arrived, they found the lid to the sarcophagus was moved aside and Lincoln's casket was on the floor --- but the grave robbers were gone!

The detectives scattered outside to search the place. Tyrell ran outside and around the base of the monument, where he saw two men near one of the statues. He whipped up his pistol and fired at them. A shot answered and they fought it out in a hail of gunfire, dodging around the monument. Suddenly, one of the men at whom he was shooting called out Tyrell's name --- he was firing at his own agents!

Mullen and Hughes had casually walked away from the tomb to await the return of Swegles, Brown and the wagon. They never suspected the whole thing had been a trap. They had only wanted to get some air and moved into the shadows where they wouldn't be seen in case someone wandered by. After a few minutes, they saw movement at the door to the tomb and had started back, thinking that Swegles had returned. They heard the pistol shots and saw a number of men around the monument. They took off running past the ravine and vanished into the night.

Assuming that Swegles had been captured, they fled back to Chicago, only to be elated when they found him waiting for them at the Hub tavern. He had returned with the horses, he told them, but found the gang gone. He had come back to Chicago, not knowing what else to do, to await word of what had happened. Thrilled with their good fortune, the would-be grave robbers spent the night in drunken celebration.

The story of the attempted grave robbery appeared in the newspaper following the presidential election but it was greeted with stunned disbelief. In fact, only one paper, the *Chicago Tribune*, would even print the story because every other newspaper in the state was sure that it was not true. To the general public, the story had to be false and most believed that it had been hoaxed for some bizarre political agenda. Most people would not believe that the Secret Service and Pinkerton agents would be stupid enough to have gathered all in one

room where they could see and hear nothing, and then wait for the criminals to act. The Democrats in Congress charged that the Republicans had hoaxed the whole thing so that it would look like the Democrats had violated the grave of a Republican hero and in this way, sway the results of the election. To put it bluntly, no one believed that Lincoln's grave had been, or ever could be, robbed!

The doubters became believers on November 18, when Mullen and Hughes were captured. The newspapers printed the story the following day and America realized the story that had appeared a short time before had actually been true. Disbelief turned into horror. Letters poured into the papers, laying the guilt at the feet of everyone from the Democrats, to southern sympathizers, to the mysterious John Wilkes Booth Fund.

The people of Illinois were especially outraged and punishment for the two men would have been severe --- if the law had allowed it. Mullen and Hughes were charged with two minor crimes. The public was aghast at the idea that these men would get off so lightly, even though the grand jury had returned a quick indictment. Continuances and changes of venue dragged the case along to May 1877, when it finally came to trial. The jury was asked by the prosecution to sentence the men to the maximum term allowed, which was five years in prison. On the first ballot, two jurors wanted the maximum; two of them wanted a two-year sentence; four others asked for varying sentences; and four others even voted for acquittal. After a few more ballots, Mullen and Hughes were incarcerated for a one-year stay in Joliet.

And Abraham Lincoln was once more left to rest peacefully in his grave, at least for a while.

It was not long before the story of the Lincoln grave robbery became a hotly denied rumor, or at best, a fading legend. The custodians of the site simply decided that it was something they did not wish to talk about. Of course, as the story began to be denied, the people who had some recollection of the tale created their own truth in myths and conspiracies. The problem in this case, however, was that many of these "conspiracies" happened to be grounded in the truth.

Hundreds of people came to see the Lincoln burial site and many of them were not afraid to ask about the stories that were being spread about the tomb. From 1876 to 1878, custodian John C. Power gave rather evasive answers to anyone who prodded him for details about the grave robbery. He was terrified of one question in particular and it seemed to be the one most often asked: was he sure that Lincoln’s body had been returned safely to the sarcophagus after the grave robbers took it out?

Power was terrified of that question for one reason, because at that time, Lincoln’s grave was completely empty!

On the morning of November 1876, when John T. Stuart of the Lincoln National Monument Association learned what had occurred in the tomb with the would-be robbers, he rushed out to the site. He was not able to rest after the incident, fearing that the grave robbers, who had not been caught at that time, would return and finish their ghoulish handiwork. So, he made a

decision. He contacted the custodian and told him that they must take the body from the crypt and hide it elsewhere in the building. Together, they decided the best place to store it would be in the cavern of passages which lay between the Memorial Hall and the catacomb.

That afternoon, Adam Johnson, a Springfield marble-worker, took some of his men and they lifted Lincoln's casket from the sarcophagus. They covered it over with a blanket and then cemented the lid back into place. Later that night, Johnson, Power and three members of the Memorial Association stole out to the monument and carried the 500-pound coffin around the base of the obelisk, through Memorial Hall and into the dark labyrinth. They placed the coffin near some boards that had been left behind in the construction. The following day, Johnson built a new outer coffin while Power set to work digging a grave below the dirt floor. It was slow work, because it had to be done between visitors to the site, and he also had a problem with water seeping into the hole. Finally, he gave up and simply covered the coffin with the leftover boards and wood.

For the next two years, Lincoln lay beneath a pile of debris in the labyrinth, while visitors from all over the world wept and mourned over the sarcophagus at the other end of the monument. More and more of these visitors asked questions about the theft, questions full of suspicion, as if they knew something they really had no way of knowing.

In the summer and fall of 1877, the legend took another turn. Workmen arrived at the monument to erect the naval and infantry groups of statuary on the corners of the upper deck. Their work would take them into the labyrinth, where Power feared they would discover the coffin. The scandal would be incredible, so Power made a quick decision. He called the workmen together and swearing them to secrecy, showed them the coffin. They promised to keep the secret, but within days everyone in Springfield seemed to know that Lincoln's body was not where it was supposed to be. Soon, the story was spreading all over the country.

Power was now in a panic. The body had to be more securely hidden and in order to do that, he needed more help. Power contacted two of his friends, Major Gustavas Dana and General Jasper Reece, and explained the situation. These men brought three others, Edward Johnson, Joseph Lindley and James McNeill, to meet with Power.

On the night of November 18, the six men began digging a grave for Lincoln at the far end of the labyrinth. Cramped and cold, and stifled by stale air, they gave up around midnight with the coffin just barely covered and traces of their activity very evident. Power promised to finish the work the next day. These six men, sobered by the responsibility that faced them, decided to form a brotherhood to guard the secret of the tomb. They brought in three younger men, Noble Wiggins, Horace Chapin and Clinton Conkling, to help in the task. They called themselves the Lincoln Guard of Honor and had badges made for their lapels.

After the funeral of Mary Lincoln, John T. Stuart told the Guard of Honor that Robert Lincoln wanted to have his mother's body hidden away with his father's. So, late on the night of July 21, the men slipped into the monument and moved Mary's double-leaded casket, burying it in the labyrinth next to Lincoln's.

Visitors to the tomb increased as the years went by, all of them paying their respects to the two empty crypts. Years later, Power would complain that questions about Lincoln's empty grave were asked of him nearly every day. Finally, in 1886, the Lincoln National Monument Association decided that it was time to provide a new tomb for Lincoln in the catacomb. A new and stronger crypt of brick and mortar was designed and made ready.

The press was kept outside as the Guard of Honor, and others who shared the secret of the tomb, brought the Lincoln caskets out of the labyrinth. Eighteen persons, who had known Lincoln in life, filed past the casket, looking into a square hole that had been cut into the lead coffin. Strangely, Lincoln had changed very little. His face was darker after twenty-two years but they were still the same sad features these people had always known. The last man to identify the corpse was Leon P. Hopkins, the same man who had closed the casket years before. He soldered the square back over the hole, thinking once again that he would be the last person to ever look upon the face of Abraham Lincoln.

The Guard of Honor lifted Lincoln's casket and placed it next to Mary's smaller one. The two of them were taken into the catacomb and lowered into the new brick and mortar vault. Here, they would sleep for all time.

"All time" lasted for about thirteen more years. In 1899, Illinois legislators decided the monument was to be torn down and a new one built from the foundations. It seemed that the present structure was settling unevenly, cracking around the "eternal" vault of the president.

There was once again the question of what to do with the bodies of the Lincoln family. The Guard of Honor came up with a clever plan. During the fifteen months needed for construction, the Lincolns would be secretly buried in a multiple grave a few feet away from the foundations of the tomb. As the old structure was torn down, tons of stone and dirt would be heaped onto the gravesite both to disguise and protect it. When the new monument was finished, the grave would be uncovered again.

When the new building was completed, the bodies were exhumed once more. In the top section of the grave were the coffins belonging to the Lincoln sons and to a grandson, also named Abraham. The former president and Mary were buried on the bottom level and so safely hidden that one side of the temporary vault had to be battered away to reach them.

Lincoln's coffin was the last to be moved and it was close to sunset when a steam engine finally hoisted it up out of the ground. The protective outer box was removed and six construction workers lifted the coffin onto their shoulders and took it into the catacomb. The other members of the family had been placed in their crypts and Lincoln's casket was placed into a white marble sarcophagus.

The group dispersed after switching on the new electric burglar alarm. This device connected the monument to the caretaker's house, which was a few hundred feet away. As up-to-date as this device was, it still did not satisfy the fears of Robert Lincoln, who was sure that his

father's body would be snatched again if care were not taken. He stayed in constant contact with the Guard of Honor, who were still working to ensure the safety of the Lincoln remains, and made a trip to Springfield every month or so after the new monument was completed. Something just wasn't right. Even though the alarm worked perfectly, he could not give up the idea that the robbery might be repeated.

He journeyed to Springfield and brought with him his own set of security plans. He met with officials and gave them explicit directions on what he wanted done. The construction company was to break a hole in the tile floor of the monument and place his father's casket at a depth of 10 feet. The coffin would then be encased in a cage of steel bars and the hole would be filled with concrete, making the president's final resting place into a solid block of stone.

On September 26, 1901, a group assembled to make the final arrangements for Lincoln's last burial. A discussion quickly turned into a heated debate. The question that concerned them was whether or not Lincoln's coffin should be opened and the body viewed one last time. Most felt this would be a wise precaution, especially in light of the continuing stories about Lincoln not being in the tomb. The men of the Guard of Honor were all for laying the tales to rest at last, but Robert was decidedly against opening the casket again, feeling that there was no need to further invade his father's privacy. In the end, practicality won out and Leon P. Hopkins was sent for to chisel out an opening in the lead coffin. The casket was placed on two sawhorses in the still-unfinished Memorial Hall. The room was described as hot and poorly lighted, as newspapers had been pasted over the windows to keep out the stares of the curious.

A piece of the coffin was cut out and lifted away. According to diaries, a "strong and reeking odor" filled the room, but the group pressed close to the opening anyway. The face of the president was covered with a fine powder made from white chalk. It had been applied in 1865 before the last burial service. It seemed that Lincoln's face had turned inexplicably black in Pennsylvania and after that, a constant covering of chalk was kept on his face. Lincoln's features were said to be completely recognizable. The casket's headrest had fallen away and his head was thrown back slightly, revealing his still perfectly trimmed beard. His small black tie and dark hair were still as they were in life, although his eyebrows had vanished. The broadcloth suit that he had worn to his second inauguration was covered with small patches of yellow mold and the American flag that was clutched in his lifeless hands was now in tatters.
There was no question, according to those present, that this was Abraham Lincoln and that he was placed in the underground vault. The casket was sealed back up again by Leon Hopkins, making his claim of years ago true. Hopkins was the last person to look upon the face of Lincoln.

The casket was then lowered down into the cage of steel and two tons of cement was poured over it, forever encasing the president's body in stone.

This should have been the end of the story but as with all lingering mysteries, a few questions

# Ancient Tablet Ignites Debate on Messiah and Resurrection - NYTimes.com

*By ETHAN BRONNER*
*Published: July 6, 2008*



JERUSALEM — A three-foot-tall tablet with 87 lines of Hebrew that scholars believe dates from the decades just before the birth of Jesus is causing a quiet stir in biblical and archaeological circles, especially because it may speak of a messiah who will rise from the dead after three days.



*Dominic Buettner for The New York Times When David Jeselsohn bought an ancient tablet, above, he was unaware of its significance.*

If such a messianic description really is there, it will contribute to a developing re-evaluation of both popular and scholarly views of Jesus, since it suggests that the story of his death and resurrection was not unique but part of a recognized Jewish tradition at the time.

The tablet, probably found near the Dead Sea in Jordan according to some scholars who have studied it, is a rare example of a stone with ink writings from that era — in essence, a Dead Sea Scroll on stone.

It is written, not engraved, across two neat columns, similar to columns in a Torah. But the stone is broken, and some of the text is faded, meaning that much of what it says is open to debate.

Still, its authenticity has so far faced no challenge, so its role in helping to understand the roots of Christianity in the devastating political crisis faced by the Jews of the time seems likely to increase.

Daniel Boyarin, a professor of Talmudic culture at the University of California at Berkeley, said that the stone was part of a growing body of evidence suggesting that Jesus could be best understood through a close reading of the Jewish history of his day.

“Some Christians will find it shocking — a challenge to the uniqueness of their theology — while others will be comforted by the idea of it being a traditional part of Judaism,” Mr. Boyarin said.

Given the highly charged atmosphere surrounding all Jesus-era artifacts and writings, both in the general public and in the fractured and fiercely competitive scholarly community, as well as the concern over forgery and charlatanism, it will probably be some time before the tablet’s contribution is fully assessed. It has been around 60 years since the Dead Sea Scrolls were uncovered, and they continue to generate enormous controversy regarding their authors and meaning.

The scrolls, documents found in the Qumran caves of the West Bank, contain some of the only known surviving copies of biblical writings from before the first century A.D. In addition to quoting from key books of the Bible, the scrolls describe a variety of practices and beliefs of a

Jewish sect at the time of Jesus.

How representative the descriptions are and what they tell us about the era are still strongly debated. For example, a question that arises is whether the authors of the scrolls were members of a monastic sect or in fact mainstream. A conference marking 60 years since the discovery of the scrolls will begin on Sunday at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where the stone, and the debate over whether it speaks of a resurrected messiah, as one iconoclastic scholar believes, also will be discussed.

Oddly, the stone is not really a new discovery. It was found about a decade ago and bought from a Jordanian antiquities dealer by an Israeli-Swiss collector who kept it in his Zurich home. When an Israeli scholar examined it closely a few years ago and wrote a paper on it last year, interest began to rise. There is now a spate of scholarly articles on the stone, with several due to be published in the coming months.

“I couldn’t make much out of it when I got it,” said David Jeselsohn, the owner, who is himself an expert in antiquities. “I didn’t realize how significant it was until I showed it to Ada Yardeni, who specializes in Hebrew writing, a few years ago. She was overwhelmed. ‘You have got a Dead Sea Scroll on stone,’ she told me.”

Much of the text, a vision of the apocalypse transmitted by the angel Gabriel, draws on the Old Testament, especially the prophets Daniel, Zechariah and Haggai.

Ms. Yardeni, who analyzed the stone along with Binyamin Elitzur, is an expert on Hebrew script, especially of the era of King Herod, who died in 4 B.C. The two of them published a long analysis of the stone more than a year ago in Cathedra, a Hebrew-language quarterly devoted to the history and archaeology of Israel, and said that, based on the shape of the script and the language, the text dated from the late first century B.C.

A chemical examination by Yuval Goren, a professor of archaeology at Tel Aviv University who specializes in the verification of ancient artifacts, has been submitted to a peer-review journal. He declined to give details of his analysis until publication, but he said that he knew of no reason to doubt the stone’s authenticity.

It was in Cathedra that Israel Knohl, an iconoclastic professor of Bible studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, first heard of the stone, which Ms. Yardeni and Mr. Elitzur dubbed “Gabriel’s Revelation,” also the title of their article. Mr. Knohl posited in a book published in 2000 the idea of a suffering messiah before Jesus, using a variety of rabbinic and early apocalyptic literature as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls. But his theory did not shake the world of Christology as he had hoped, partly because he had no textual evidence from before Jesus.

When he read “Gabriel’s Revelation,” he said, he believed he saw what he needed to solidify his thesis, and he has published his argument in the latest issue of The Journal of Religion.

Mr. Knohl is part of a larger scholarly movement that focuses on the political atmosphere in Jesus’ day as an important explanation of that era’s messianic spirit. As he notes, after the

death of Herod, Jewish rebels sought to throw off the yoke of the Rome-supported monarchy, so the rise of a major Jewish independence fighter could take on messianic overtones.

In Mr. Knohl's interpretation, the specific messianic figure embodied on the stone could be a man named Simon who was slain by a commander in the Herodian army, according to the first-century historian Josephus. The writers of the stone's passages were probably Simon's followers, Mr. Knohl contends.

The slaying of Simon, or any case of the suffering messiah, is seen as a necessary step toward national salvation, he says, pointing to lines 19 through 21 of the tablet — "In three days you will know that evil will be defeated by justice" — and other lines that speak of blood and slaughter as pathways to justice.

To make his case about the importance of the stone, Mr. Knohl focuses especially on line 80, which begins clearly with the words "L'shloshet yamin," meaning "in three days." The next word of the line was deemed partially illegible by Ms. Yardeni and Mr. Elitzur, but Mr. Knohl, who is an expert on the language of the Bible and Talmud, says the word is "hayeh," or "live" in the imperative. It has an unusual spelling, but it is one in keeping with the era.

Two more hard-to-read words come later, and Mr. Knohl said he believed that he had deciphered them as well, so that the line reads, "In three days you shall live, I, Gabriel, command you."

To whom is the archangel speaking? The next line says "Sar hasarin," or prince of princes. Since the Book of Daniel, one of the primary sources for the Gabriel text, speaks of Gabriel and of "a prince of princes," Mr. Knohl contends that the stone's writings are about the death of a leader of the Jews who will be resurrected in three days.

He says further that such a suffering messiah is very different from the traditional Jewish image of the messiah as a triumphal, powerful descendant of King David.

"This should shake our basic view of Christianity," he said as he sat in his office of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem where he is a senior fellow in addition to being the Yehezkel Kaufman Professor of Biblical Studies at Hebrew University. "Resurrection after three days becomes a motif developed before Jesus, which runs contrary to nearly all scholarship. What happens in the New Testament was adopted by Jesus and his followers based on an earlier messiah story."

Ms. Yardeni said she was impressed with the reading and considered it indeed likely that the key illegible word was "hayeh," or "live." Whether that means Simon is the messiah under discussion, she is less sure.

Moshe Bar-Asher, president of the Israeli Academy of Hebrew Language and emeritus professor of Hebrew and Aramaic at the Hebrew University, said he spent a long time studying the text and considered it authentic, dating from no later than the first century B.C. His 25-page paper on the stone will be published in the coming months.

Regarding Mr. Knohl's thesis, Mr. Bar-Asher is also respectful but cautious. "There is one problem," he said. "In crucial places of the text there is lack of text. I understand Knohl's tendency to find there keys to the pre-Christian period, but in two to three crucial lines of text there are a lot of missing words."

Moshe Idel, a professor of Jewish thought at Hebrew University, said that given the way every tiny fragment from that era yielded scores of articles and books, "Gabriel's Revelation" and Mr. Knohl's analysis deserved serious attention. "Here we have a real stone with a real text," he said. "This is truly significant."

Mr. Knohl said that it was less important whether Simon was the messiah of the stone than the fact that it strongly suggested that a savior who died and rose after three days was an established concept at the time of Jesus. He notes that in the Gospels, Jesus makes numerous predictions of his suffering and New Testament scholars say such predictions must have been written in by later followers because there was no such idea present in his day.

But there was, he said, and "Gabriel's Revelation" shows it.

"His mission is that he has to be put to death by the Romans to suffer so his blood will be the sign for redemption to come," Mr. Knohl said. "This is the sign of the son of Joseph. This is the conscious view of Jesus himself. This gives the Last Supper an absolutely different meaning. To shed blood is not for the sins of people but to bring redemption to Israel."

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Ā. Dirige domine. ps̄
Verba mea auribus
percipe domine: intel
lige clamorē meū.



# Bigfoot Captured breaks History: Channel continues to fake out viewers

doubtfulnews.com

**November 11, 2015 • 9 Comments**

WOW! History Channel pulled a “Mermaids” gimmick. Why would they sabotage their credibility? Oh wait, ever since it became the “Hitler” Channel a while ago, it’s been heading downhill. According to this review of their latest special program, *Bigfoot Captured*, a “shameful fake documentary” about Bigfoot, it’s hit rock bottom.



*All you can really say is that it looks LESS fake than the fake in a cage from Russia. That’s a f**ing LOW bar.*

Reviewer Jim Vorel of Paste Magazine takes the show and the network to task for a reprehensible production. He notes that most people will consider this entertainment (what about HISTORY?), but, don’t assume too much.

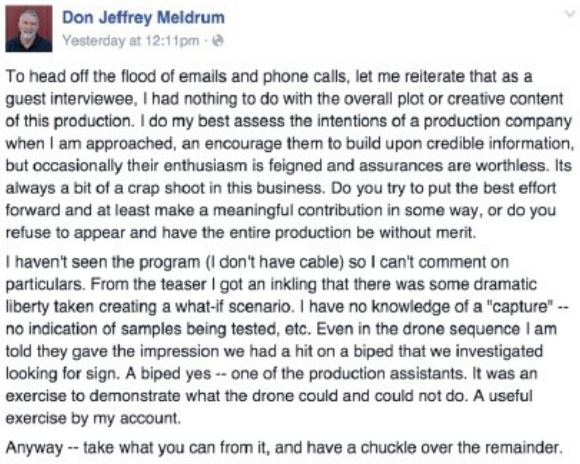
The problem is that no, not *everyone* knows it’s entertainment. And if you’re intelligent enough to know that, then you should also realize that it’s the impressionable people watching who most need a source they can actually trust in order to provide real information. These people don’t need entertainment. They need a network that’s actually serving their best interest—and for the record, their best interest is “Not having pseudoscientific beliefs that they’ll pass on to anyone in earshot.”

> Still don’t believe that anyone takes a program like *Bigfoot Captured* seriously? Okay, let me just go check Twitter for 30 seconds, hold on…

And then he follows with quotes of presumably real people who just want to believe. Badly. So badly, that they will not suffer any modicum of thinking (let alone critical thinking) and really buy into this premise. I might guess the positive comments were fake but, I’ve seen too much to underestimate people’s gullibility. Recall that for the mermaids and megalodon television fiascos, some people responded the same way – assuming it was real. I even had my own personal situation as some of my own family members thought the mermaids show was real. I’m not kidding. I REALLY wish I was, though.

*Bigfoot Captured* followed the form of those two M & M stinkers by structuring the show as realistic – researchers looking for evidence. However, among the actors was a real scientist, Dr. Jeff Meldrum, who is WELL KNOWN as probably the most credentialed Bigfoot advocate around. He seemed so worried about how the show would turn out that he put up a message

of disclaimer on his Facebook page.


Don Jeffrey Meldrum
Yesterday at 12:11pm ·

To head off the flood of emails and phone calls, let me reiterate that as a guest interviewee, I had nothing to do with the overall plot or creative content of this production. I do my best assess the intentions of a production company when I am approached, an encourage them to build upon credible information, but occasionally their enthusiasm is feigned and assurances are worthless. Its always a bit of a crap shoot in this business. Do you try to put the best effort forward and at least make a meaningful contribution in some way, or do you refuse to appear and have the entire production be without merit.

I haven't seen the program (I don't have cable) so I can't comment on particulars. From the teaser I got an inkling that there was some dramatic liberty taken creating a what-if scenario. I have no knowledge of a "capture" -- no indication of samples being tested, etc. Even in the drone sequence I am told they gave the impression we had a hit on a biped that we investigated looking for sign. A biped yes -- one of the production assistants. It was an exercise to demonstrate what the drone could and could not do. A useful exercise by my account.

Anyway -- take what you can from it, and have a chuckle over the remainder.

*Screen Shot 2015-11-11 at 3.35.27 PM*

He also noted that the taping was done a while ago. He was only directly involved with "the conception and creation of the hypothetical skeleton" as described in this media piece. Regardless, the speculation quotient in the mostly unscientific field of cryptozoology is already REALLY high, it's always been. This sort of contemporary TV depiction takes it over the edge, even annoying serious Bigfoot believers. Vogel, who discovered Meldrum did not know what the program was going to turn in to was *still* not sympathetic. Rather, such a piece of crap production should be expected; it's the norm. Many scientists have already refused to participate in interviews with the Discovery Network. No wonder!

*Bigfoot Captured* is another in a series of programs that History Channel labels "Breaking History". This also includes specials about hunting Hitler, finding the lost colony of Roanoke and Atlantis, the truth about Alcatraz, predictions of Nostradamus, and secrets of Einstein's brain. They may indeed have broken history. Nice job. Full disclosure: I didn't watch the program, nor will it. It was too ridiculous to even mention. After a point, you learn not to waste time on this kind of television. But, if we have to spell it out as to WHY it was OBVIOUS that such a show would be speculative nonsense or outright fiction, here are two reasons and a helpful rule of thumb:

- There is no scientifically compelling evidence of Bigfoot. If there was such evidence, more than a few scientists would be all over it.
- If a Bigfoot had been found, dead or alive, the news of it would not be appearing on a cable special.
- Considering the current lineup of shows on this channel, this one falls along the same pattern of garbage shows like *Ancient Aliens, UFO Hunters*, and the rest of the "reality" fare delivered by History Channel. They seem to have a thing going; it's unsurprising this follows the pattern.

Discovery Channel supposedly gave up the bottom of the barrel sludge they called "Monster Week" that featured "Man-eating Superwolves" and "Killer Lampreys" followed by "Killed By a Yeti". They also resorted to cheap media hoaxing tactics. But the worst and most unethical thing they did was to have actors playing scientists with very real-sounding names and government titles, and outright hoaxing the evidence. Nevertheless, those types of shows got huge ratings.

Destination America has picked up the paranormal theme from SyFy and Discovery Network, so the tabloid-type tv shows continue.

In the past few years, Animal Planet seemed to run out of real animals to talk about and

ventured into the realm of mythical monsters with the added feature of treating them as real. Science writer Brian Switek said Animal Planet “embodies the rotting carcass of science TV”. Now we can say the same about History Channel for historical programming. The phenomena is known as “channel drift” where the network strays away from its mission in order to attract a larger (less discerning) audience. Word: Short-term gains will lead to long-term DOOM.

Fake history on “History Channel”…
Mythical animals on “Animal Planet”…
Hoaxed discoveries on “Discovery Channel”…

Keep digging your holes deeper, why don’t ya’ Rock bottom is close by!

We live in fraudulent times. That’s what Doubtful News is here for.

**9 comments for “Bigfoot Captured breaks History: Channel continues to fake out viewers”**



1. Steve
November 11, 2015 at 4:46 PM

I really wish the first thing taught in science classes is Carl Sagan’s phrase “extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof”. I didn’t hear it until my mid 20’s, changed my thinking.

Although I did get taught to never buy snake oil from a salesman and “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is”.

I think the History Channel still has a way before hitting rock bottom, after all they still haven’t had the special “Bigfoot vs. Hitler, the battle for control of Atlantis!” Of course, as predicted by Nostradamus and judged by aliens.



Asha
November 11, 2015 at 6:34 PM

Steve, I agree. I get so depressed when I think about the complete lack of critical thinking skills most people seem to have these days. (I’m also battling a migraine today, and so I’m much more pessimistic, misanthropic doom and gloom than usual. Apparently, extraordinary pain turns me into an extraordinarily pessimistic misanthrope, but I digress.)
I’m sorry to have to correct you, but I think that your Bigfoot v. Hitler smackdown hypothesis is incorrect, as History (a division of A&E networks) will pull a fast one on us, revealing that Bigfoot IS Hitler, Hitler IS Bigfoot. The specifics of how it works aren’t important, only the ratings are. Nostradamus not only predicted it, but he’ll also be judging it, as he’s an alien. No, he’s ALL aliens. Every UFO crash/sighting/abduction, etc., that was him. Multiple aliens were seen? It was still all him. Again, the fact that he’s still alive, has a spaceship and can appear as

multiple beings in different places around the world all at once isn't as important as the ratings, but basically, they'll use it next year to "expose" Santa Claus. Krampus will be featured heavily in this, because he's so de rigeur these days, and of course we'll learn that Krampus is Bigfoot is Hitler. Duh! Anyhow, this "evidence" will be revealed "live" from Atlantis, which is, of course, a secret Nazi base that is hidden under the ice in Antarctica, and also under the water in the Arctic, (North Pole, of course!) whilst also being located in the center of the hollow earth, and, most obviously, on the moon. All at the same time. Because, ratings and no thinking, critical or otherwise.



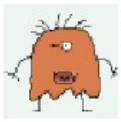
2. Eric
November 11, 2015 at 5:33 PM

I think it's such a shame that the same money used to produce these scam shows could actually be used for real scientific research etc and again a show could be produced. Fund an actual real archeological dig or expedition into the jungle to look for new plants / animals etc. and do it with real scientists!! Not sure why this is such a far fetched idea. I think this is what nat geo does?



3. Matthew M. Anderson
November 11, 2015 at 6:21 PM

For many people, "seeing is believing", and an image is more powerful than a hundred reasons. There is a general blurring of fact & fiction, reality & fantasy, news & propaganda. Many have adopted the notion that there IS no reality, and whatever you believe to be true is true for you. You have your truth and I have my truth, in other words. How did we get here? When did feeling replace thinking? I expect more and greater deception from more and more once-trusted sources.



¤ Graham
November 11, 2015 at 7:40 PM

I don't fully know just how it happened, but the first step was when postmodernism left literary studies and was embraced wholeheartedly by the 'New Age Movement', peddling woo is so much easier if everything is just a matter of opinion.



4. Dolores
November 11, 2015 at 7:04 PM

Jeff Meldrum has misled millions and lined his own pocket in the process. His pearl-clutching about one TV show is frankly ridiculous. At least the show did give some disclaimers. Unlike most of Meldrum's entertainment ventures.



5. fredthechemist
November 11, 2015 at 7:19 PM

Next show: “UFO Aliens Sank Titanic – Elvis’ Ghost reveals”



idoubtit
November 11, 2015 at 9:00 PM

I now really want to start a thread just about recommended extreme History Channel programs. Search/Tweet #NextOnHistoryChannel



6. jerrywayne
November 11, 2015 at 8:50 PM

It’s all about profits. Sadly, more people are interested in nonsense than in real history. Commercial sells are the driving force, not legitimate information.

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The human brain's neurons fire in sync to music, and trained musicians are better at it than are amateurs

By Diana Kwon | November 10, 2015

While listening to music, you might find yourself tapping your foot or bobbing your head to the beat. What you might not have expected is that as you listen to your favorite tune, the rhythms in your brain also follow along.

Brain rhythms arise when large groups of neurons fire together. Previous studies have shown that listening to someone talk can elicit such activity. Now research reveals that brain rhythms also synchronize with musical sequences. And musical training can enhance this ability. The study is in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* [Keith B. Doelling and David Poeppel, Cortical entrainment to music and its modulation by expertise].

Magnetoencelphalography, or MEG, is a technique that measures the tiny magnetic fields generated by brain activity. Researchers used MEG to compare the brains of musicians and non-musicians while the subjects tried to detect small changes in pitch during short clips of classical piano music by composers like Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. The trained musicians, not surprisingly, tracked the pitch changes better.

When it came to tempo, musicans and nonmusicians alike synched their brains to the music —when the music had more than one note per second. But when faced with slower tempos, only the brains of musicians synched up.

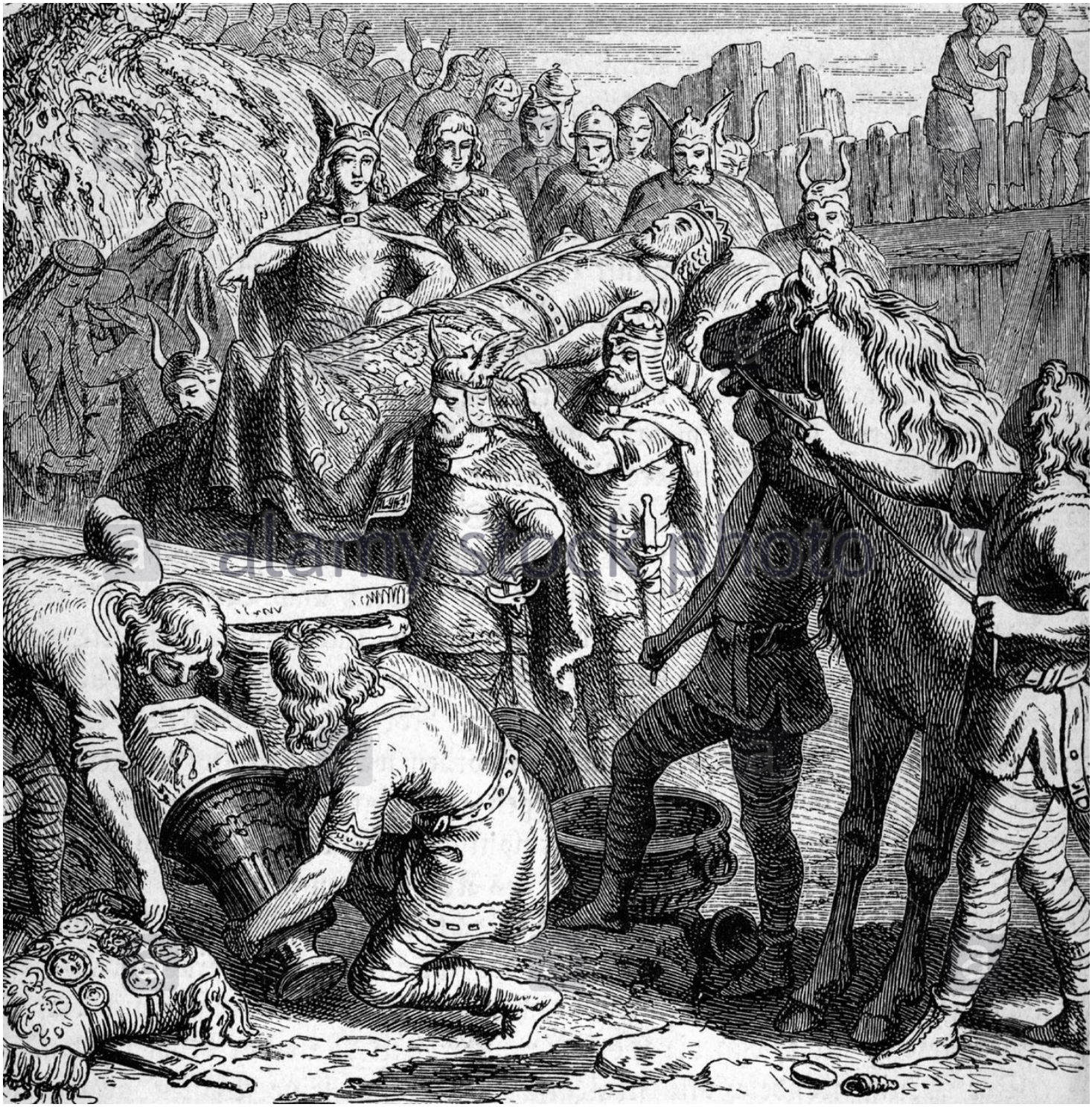
Because speech and music share similar brain networks, it’s possible that musical training thus could also improve linguistic abilities. So pick up your instrument of choice and play away—you might not feel it, but your brainwaves will dance along to your favorite song.

—Diana Kwon

Gopher63 November 12, 2015, 3:02 PM

> Since my 2nd pacemaker 5 years ago, I take afternoon naps. To relax, I listen to classical music over one of the music channels on my cable TV. Quieter music works better, and instrumental better than vocal. Baroque music is some of my favorites and that works the best. I guess that slower tempos also work better and Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, heard in the audio clip, would work quite nicely (music to nap by, that would be quite the album). Although I don't have a trained voice, I have until recently sung in church choirs for years and still continue singing hymns and liturgy. I took piano 5 years as a child and played clarinet in orchestra and band in high school. For decades, my wife and I played several voices of recorders. My pitch discrimination, although not perfect, is pretty close. I guess you could say I'm a musician.

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Jun**26**by The Chirurgeon's Apprentice

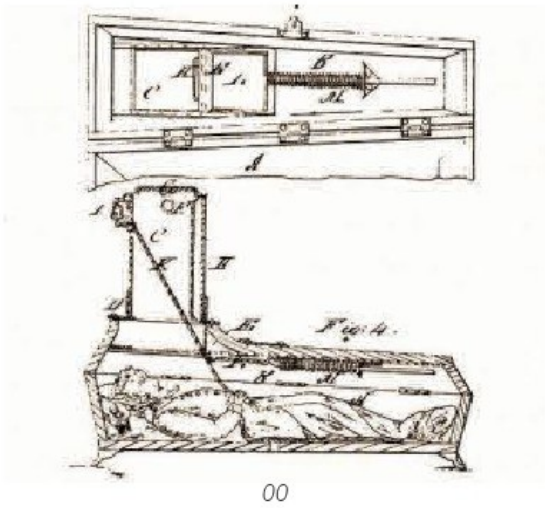

LIFE - PRESERVING
COFFIN
IN DOUBTFUL CASES OF DEATH,
BALTIMORE, MD.

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In 1822, Dr Adolf Gutsmuth set out to conquer his fear of being buried alive by consigning himself to the grave in a 'safety coffin' that he had designed himself. For several hours, he remained underground, during which time he consumed a meal of soup, sausages and beer—all delivered to him through a convenient feeding tube built into the coffin.

Gutsmuth wasn't the first to design something like this. Around 1790, the Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick had the first safety coffin built which included a window to allow light in and a tube to provide a fresh supply of air. The lid of the coffin was then locked and two keys were fitted into a special pocket sewn into his burial shroud: one for the coffin itself and one for the tomb.

The Germans were particularly ingenious when it came to safety coffins, patenting over 30 different designs in the 19th century. The best-known one was the brainchild of Dr Johann Gottfried Taberger, which included a system of ropes that attached the corpse's hands, feet and head to an above-ground bell.

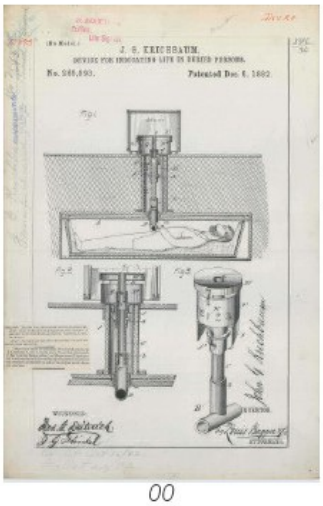

Fig 4.

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Although many subsequent designs tried to incorporate this feature, it was by-and-large a design failure. What Dr Taberger didn't account for is the fact that the body begins to bloat and swell as it decomposes, causing it to shift inside the coffin. These tiny movements would have set the bells ringing, and visitors to the cemetery running.

Of course, it wasn't just the Germans who were consumed with taphophobia. Writer and artist, Adrian Teal, recently told the story of an 18th-century Brit who had his coffin stored in the rafters of his house. And the American doctor, Timothy Clark Smith was so fearful that he would catch the 'sleeping sickness' and be buried alive, that he created a grave that continues to intrigue (and frighten) visitors of Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven, Vermont.

When Dr Smith died (aptly enough on Halloween, 1893), his body was interred in a most unusual crypt, with his face positioned beneath a cement tube that ended at a piece of plate glass which would allow the unfortunate doctor to gaze upward in the event of his premature burial. Visitors to the cemetery used to report that they could peer down inside the grave and see Dr Smith's decomposing head. Nowadays, all you can see is darkness and a bit of condensation (to see photo, click here).



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The American horror writer, Edgar Allen Poe, also seemed unnaturally preoccupied by thoughts of being buried alive as the subject appears with some frequency in his own writings. In the story, *Premature Burial* (1850), he even describes a Taberger-like coffin with 'a large bell [suspended from the roof of the tomb], the rope of which, it was designed, should extend through a hole in the coffin, and so be fastened to one of the hands of the corpse.'

If ropes were a failure, then the Russian Count Michel de Karnice-Karnicki's design was an even bigger catastrophe. In 1897, he buried one of his assistants in order to demonstrate the features of his safety coffin. If the device detected movement from within, it was rigged to open a tube which would allow air to flow while simultaneously raising a flag and ringing a bell. Unfortunately, nothing went to plan and the demonstration failed miserably. The assistant survived. Karnice-Karnicki's reputation did not.

If all this seems a bit superstitious to your modern sensibilities, consider the fact that safety coffins are still available for purchase today. In 1995, Fabrizio Caselli invented a model that includes an emergency alarm, two-way intercom, a flashlight, oxygen tank, heartbeat sensor and heart stimulator.

The fear of premature burial is far from dead, dear readers.

This entry was posted in Casebooks and tagged buried alive, coffins, Death, edgar allen poe, history, lindsey fitzharris, premature burial, the chirurgeon's apprentice.

**18 comments on "Buried Alive: 19th-Century Safety Coffins"**

1. Podcast Powwow: Lore says:
October 26, 2015 at 12:36 AM

[…] they still be alive in their graves. The fear was so real that, in 1822, a medical doctor named Adolf Gutsmith invented a "safety coffin" that allowed him to be buried alive. While buried, he was […]

2. What Is A Zombie Ghost? says:
May 28, 2015 at 5:55 PM

[…] Heaven, they can't be brought back unless of course they really want to return. The bells of Safety Coffins, most common in the 19th century, rang crazily on All Souls Day. Although most of the calls for […]

3. Slow Blink says:
March 24, 2015 at 2:40 PM

Where can I find information on Karnice-Karnicki's design?

4. The Real Stories Behind 7 Everyday Expressions | Business Insider says:
January 8, 2015 at 4:02 AM

[…] intervention — and even though being buried alive was a very real fear (with actual "safety coffins" designed at this time), this is not where the phrase actually comes […]

5. The Real Stories Behind 7 Everyday Expressions | Lux fashion says:
January 7, 2015 at 4:18 PM

[…] minute intervention — and even though being buried alive was a very real fear (with actual "safety coffins" designed at this time), this is not where the phrase actually comes […]

6. History A'la Carte 6-27-13 - Random Bits of Fascination says:
September 5, 2014 at 4:31 PM

[…] Buried Alive: 19th-Century Safety Coffins […]

7. sandvick says:
August 10, 2014 at 7:56 PM

Reblogged this on DailyHistory.org and commented:
Today's Sunday "Blog" from the past comes from The Chirurgeon's Apprentice. The Chirurgeon's Apprentice is a wonderfully morbid blog run by Dr. Lindsey Fitzharris focusing on the History of Medicine. This "Blog" is about 19th-Century Safety Coffins. 19th Century medicine was fairly abysmal and it I can imagine that a lot of people were concerned that they would be buried before they were actually dead. Perhaps coffin builders were hoping to corner the vampire market. Fitzharris's post describes the surprising number of safety coffins that were designed and built. Enjoy!

Reply
8. "On The Fringe" Why Cemeteries? | says:
July 6, 2014 at 2:51 AM

[…] deaths, I know that it is a fairly well-known fact that before modern medicine people would get buried alive. Especially in areas where diseases such as the black plague and cholera went through and a lot of […]

9. Tre rekommendationer | There is grandeur in this view of life says:
January 6, 2014 at 7:41 PM

[…] och groteska bloggen om kirurgins tidiga historia och diverse andra morbida saker. Se till exempel det här inlägget om […]

10. lucidwritingandvisuals says:
January 6, 2014 at 12:45 PM

Wasn't live burial an accurate fear in the past, since death was not fully understood.

Weren't those in a coma sometimes buried? Loved reading this.

Lucy

- The Chirurgeon's Apprentice says:
January 6, 2014 at 12:49 PM

  You're right that the boundaries between life and death were not understood very well in the past, although you must remember that people were not buried immediately either (unless in cases of disease outbreaks). It's impossible to know how many people were actually buried alive. I can say that there is no evidence that any of these safety coffins ever saved someone's life.

  - lucidwritingandvisuals says:
  January 6, 2014 at 3:50 PM

    you are certainly right that the body was often laid out for days before burial, sometimes the ground was frozen and 'the viewing' took months.

11. The Battle of the Tooth Worm « says:
January 6, 2014 at 12:38 PM

[…] lot of strange objects in my research: books bound in human skin, prosthetic noses made of silver, iron coffins with safety devices to prevent premature burial. But perhaps one of the strangest objects I've seen is the one […]

12. Safety Coffins from the 1800s | prettyawfulthings says:
August 2, 2013 at 5:05 PM

[…] The Chirurgeon's Apprentice for additional history and […]

13. History A'la Carte 6-20-13 | Maria Grace says:
June 27, 2013 at 4:39 PM

[…] Buried Alive: 19th-Century Safety Coffins […]

14. jeanjames26 says:
June 27, 2013 at 3:00 PM

Why was there such fear of the 'sleeping sickness', and of being buried alive? Was this such a common occurence as to spur the production of these coffins?

- The Chirurgeon's Apprentice says:
June 27, 2013 at 3:07 PM

  This is a great question – I knew someone would ask it! I'm actually going to work on a follow-up piece which will hopefully answer these questions. Sorry this is not immediately satisfying but more research is required!

15. nightsmusic says:
June 26, 2013 at 6:23 PM

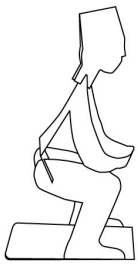
I've been morbidly fascinated with this subject since my first Poe which was The Premature Burial. I had no idea people were still doing this though in an era when embalming is the norm.

I'm very surprised to see that the glass 'window on the world' on Smith's grave was never broken though by some cemetery vandal.

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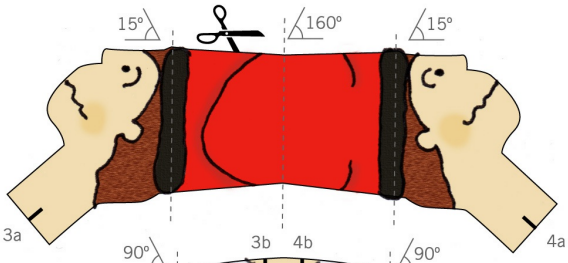


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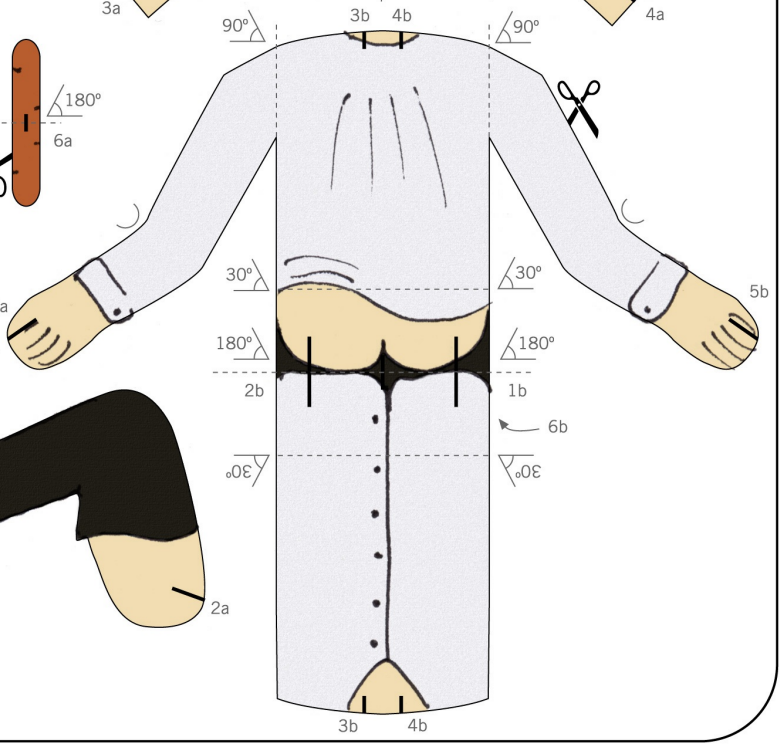


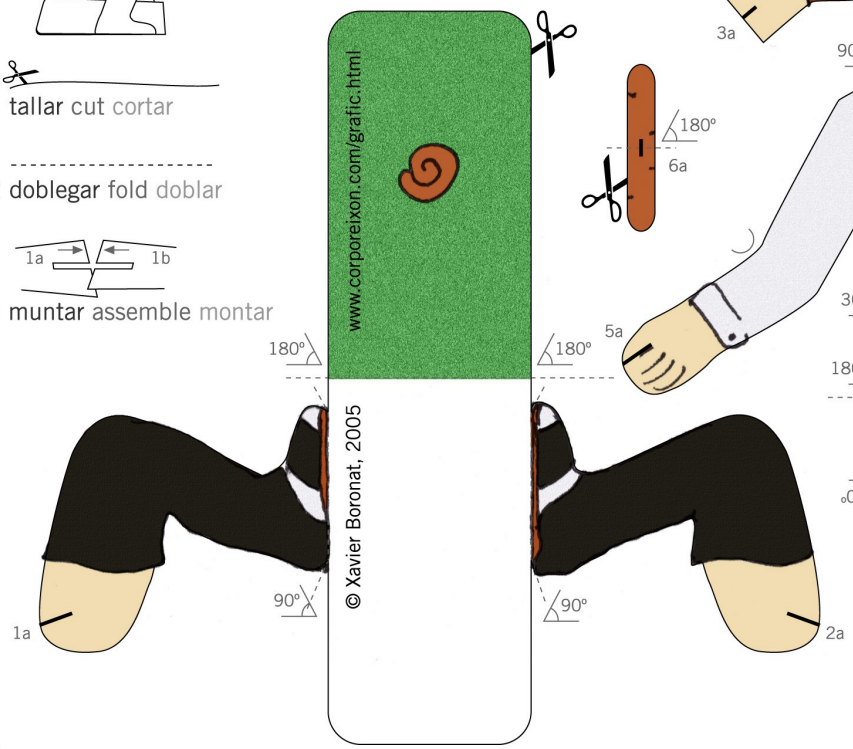

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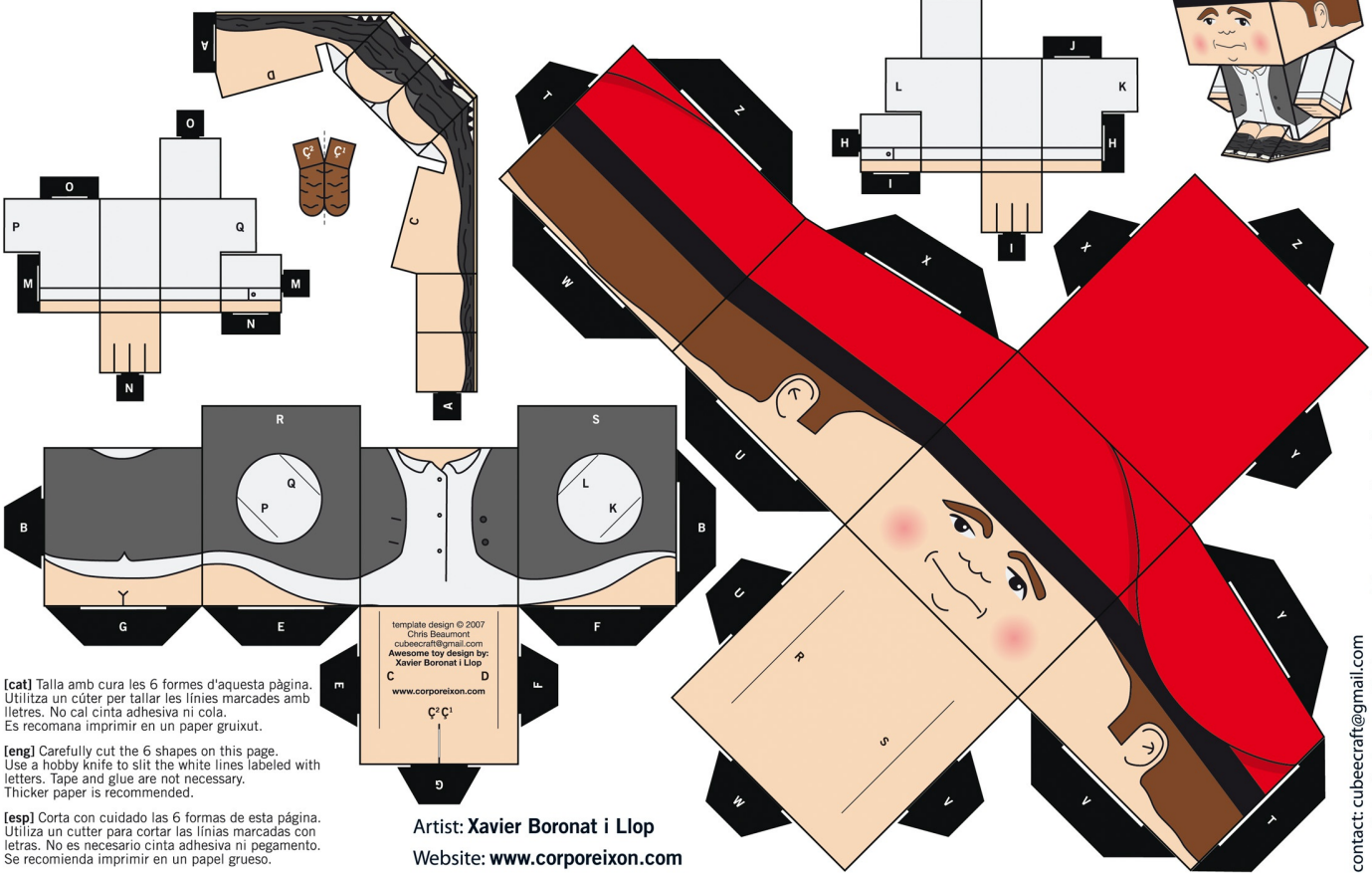




# CAGANER 10

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**[eng]** Carefully cut the 6 shapes on this page. Use a hobby knife to slit the white lines labeled with letters. Tape and glue are not necessary. Thicker paper is recommended.

**[esp]** Corta con cuidado las 6 formas de esta página. Utiliza un cutter para cortar las líneas marcadas con letras. No es necesario cinta adhesiva ni pegamento. Se recomienda imprimir en un papel grueso.

Artist: **Xavier Boronat i Llop**

Website: **www.corporeixon.com**

contact: cubeecraft@gmail.com

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# VAMPIRES.

AMHERST, August, 1899.

Some years ago the writer, accompanied by a friend, was travelling on foot in Greece. One day, after sunset, we reached an isolated farmhouse, situated on the edge of what was then the great Copaic morass, immediately north of Orchomenus. We had been tramping through Greece for seven weeks; we were very footsore, and a long walk had made us unusually tired and hungry on that particular day. As we approached the house, we were greeted by the barking of a huge, and apparently very savage, dog, who made frantic efforts to break his chain in order to gratify his burning curiosity in regard to the two forlorn travellers. Had we known what was to follow, the dog would have inspired us with more respect, but we had seen many Grecian curs masquerading as lions, though at heart they were as cowardly as hares. So, trusting to knowledge born of experience with other dogs, we scarcely deigned to notice the vigorous protests of this savage beast. Arrived at the door of the farmhouse, we knocked once and again. Apparently the house had no inmate. But after a time the door opened cautiously, and a burly Albanian peasant appeared in the doorway extending towards us a pair of tongs in which was held a live coal of fire. The extraordinary performance rendered us for the moment speechless with astonishment. The

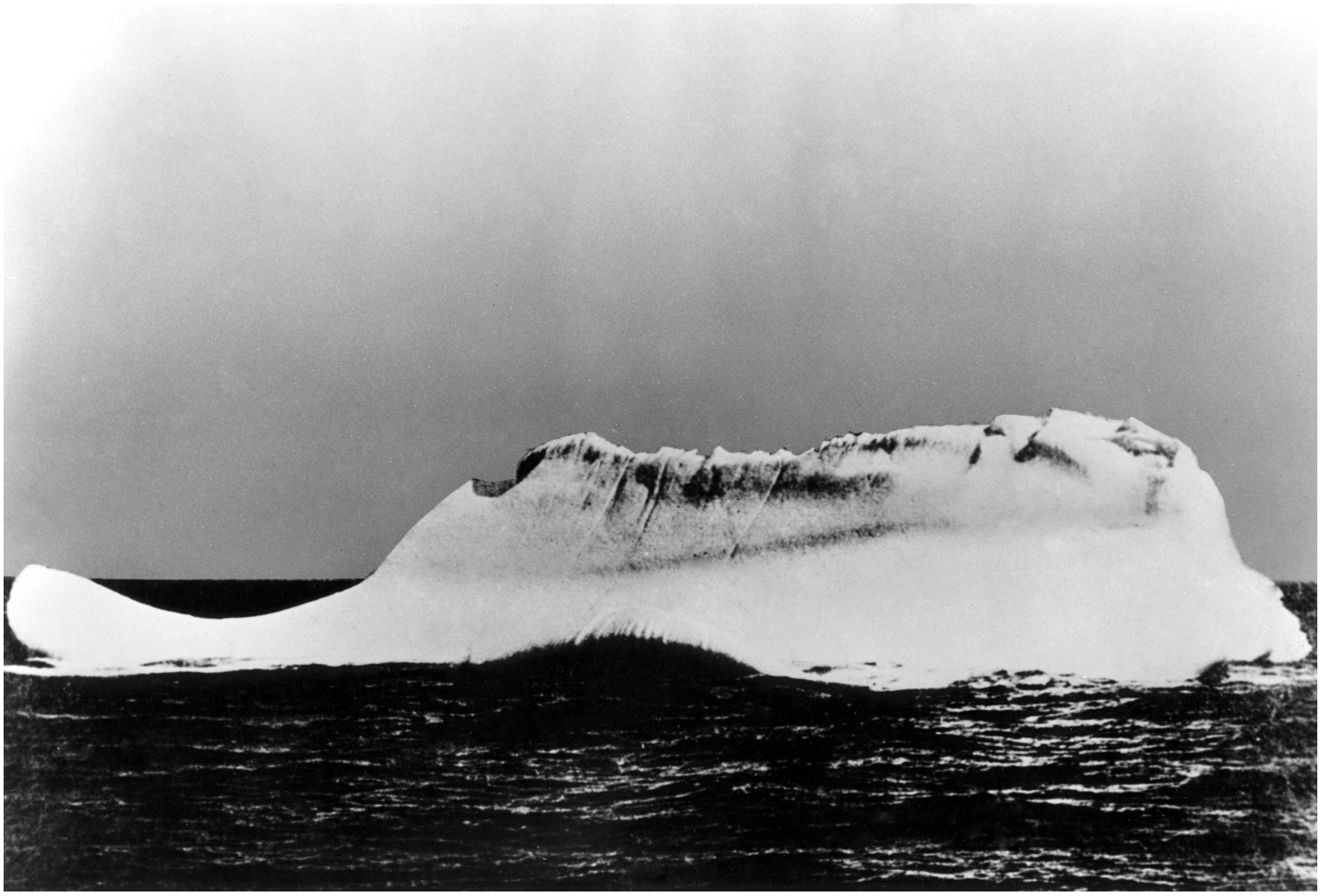
# MISCELLANEOUS.

## THE DREAD OF THE SUPERNATURAL.

WHY does mankind generally dread the supernatural? Why is it that, if a man sees a white figure at his bed's head, and knows it to be a man, he is not frightened, while if he really thinks it is not a man, but a ghost, he is as likely as not to be terrified out of his wits? The editor of *The Spectator* propounds these questions, and then proceeds to speculate a little as to the answer. Ghost-fright, he argues, differs in kind from the fright that comes from active danger. We quote at this point from his article:

"Most people have, we imagine, at some time or other in their lives experienced that eerie, uncanny, creepy feeling which is associated with the possibility of contact with the supernatural. Yet few would declare that it was in any sense connected with the dread of loss of life or limb. The man or woman who wakes up in the middle of the night and hears strange noises—thumps, raps, clangs, and creakings—or sees lights or feels the touch of unseen hands, is probably very frightened, but the sense of bodily fear is not present. There is no dread of being killed. People in the agony of terror caused by dangerous accidents constantly call out that they are going to be killed, but we doubt if that is ever the case in the fright caused by haunted houses. Possibly this difference may be said to be due to the fact that the dread of the supernatural is not nearly so acute as that caused by the imminent risk of death. People, it may be argued, only imagine themselves to be frightened of ghosts as women pretend to be frightened of mice. In neither case is the fright quite genuine. It is only want of self-control, and could be mastered in an instant if the will-power were in proper order. Unfortunately for those who argue thus, there is plenty of evidence to show that occasionally the dread of the supernatural produces very serious results. . . .

"Another strange thing about the dread of the supernatural is its greater power of transmission. One may, no doubt, read about hairbreadth escapes with a pleasing thrill of danger, and



# Centuries-old coffins, skeletons found beneath NYC street






A plywood wall surrounds the opening to an underground construction area, Thursday, Nov. 5, 2015 in...

By: JAKE PEARSON
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*Burial Vaults*

NEW YORK (AP) — Two centuries-old burial vaults discovered beneath a street in the heart of New York University's campus by workers replacing a water main were likely part of a Presbyterian church cemetery, an archaeologist said Thursday.

One of the roughly 15-by-18-foot crypts was clearly disturbed, with the skeletons and skulls of between nine and 12 people pushed into a corner while more than a dozen stacked wooden coffins can be seen in the second one, said Chrysalis' Alyssa Loorya, the project's principal investigator.

"You never know what you can find beneath the city's streets," she said at the site in Manhattan's Greenwich Village neighborhood. "You bury people to memorialize them and these people were forgotten."

Anthropologists and archeologists have hung lights in the excavated area and will use digital cameras with zoom lenses to take pictures of the coffin plates in the hopes of identifying the buried. And because New York City policy is to leave burial grounds undisturbed if possible, project engineers are planning a new route for the water main.

"We knew we could be encountering remains or other items in this area," said Thomas Foley, an associate commissioner with the city's Department of Design and Construction. "We'll do some exploring to discover what other lanes we might have."

Loorya's firm was contracted to work on the three-year, $9 million project because Washington Square Park adjacent to the excavation work was a Potter's Field for yellow fever victims in the early 1800s, officials said. The tombs' brick roofs were discovered Tuesday by workers just 3 ½ feet under the street with utility cables running on top of them.

The vaults were probably built in the late 18th century or early 19th century and belonged to one of two area Presbyterian churches, Loorya said. Members of her team will search old newspapers, death records and church archives to identify the buried — if possible.

The discovery is not the first time officials have discovered historical artifacts in the course of planned upkeep projects to replace old pipes and water mains.

Eighteenth century houses and wells along with Revolutionary War buttons worn by soldiers who marched in the Battle of Brooklyn were found during construction work beginning in 2005 in lower Manhattan's South Street Seaport area, Loorya said.

"It's definitely a wonderful find," she said.

AP News | © 2015 Associated Press |

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The Boston Globe

*Late in September, in honor of the 20th anniversary of the closing of the Boston Garden, we told the mystery of the Boston Garden monkey; to read that piece, click here. Last week, we continued the series, including photos of the monkey and stories from those who originally found it; to read part two, click here. This is the third and final piece in the series.*

"My brother took it," said Richard Bagen Sr., a building wrecker who was part of the team that demolished the Boston Garden in 1998—and found the mysterious Boston Garden monkey.

Richard had photo evidence that the monkey corpse existed, but he didn't have the monkey itself.



*The Boston Garden monkey, photographed while taken out of hiding in 1998.*

"[My brother] might sit out on the porch and still talk to it, I have no clue," he said.

The search was on to find John.

Two weeks and several calls later, it seemed as though John was unreachable. Maybe he didn't have the monkey after all? Maybe he'd rather it not be seen.

Just as hope began to fade, a call came out of nowhere.

"Meet me at the Sons of Italy in Weymouth, Monday at three. I can show you the monkey."

Upon arrival at the Sons of Italy, John Bagen came to the door. The large function hall was quiet and mostly empty—it was the middle of a workday, after all—but the space's vintage character seemed to suggest that the monkey story was just one of many odd tales that had been passed around between the walls.

In an upstairs room, John had several photos spread over a table. He began to tell his story.

“Everybody says it didn’t exist, but me and a few other guys found it,” John said. “[My co-worker] Roger Beal screamed, ‘Come here!’ Then Eddie Sullivan and I came over, and there it was.”



*The crew of building wreckers included John Bagen (fourth from right), Eddie Sullivan (fifth from left), Richard Bagen (third from left), and Roger Beal (far left).*

The location he provided matched the one given by his brother, Richard, and Eddie Sullivan, another Garden wrecker we spoke with.

“We were working on the roof of the Garden, pulling up boards,” John said. “There was like a second roof above the roof. [The monkey] was basically right above center court. We started dropping the tressels and [we kept] the monkey in the beams so nobody could find him because we didn’t want to take him off the job—bad luck, maybe.”

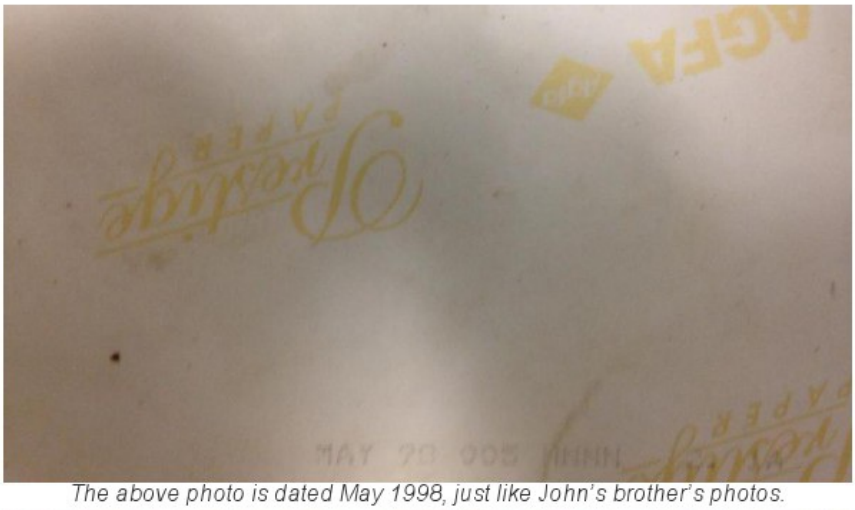

*John Bagan holding up the monkey on top of the Boston Garden.*

Like his brother, John remembered hiding the deceased animal in an electrical box. He recounted several other keep-away stories with Garden officials as well.

“There was a basket on the roof, and we’d send that up and down [to deliver things back and forth from ground-level],” John said. “We tied [the monkey] very nicely in this little papoose thing, and safety people were everywhere from Morse Diesel. One day they were standing right by it on the ground and [an overseer] came up and said, ‘I smell something.’ It didn’t smell all that bad because it was petrified, but it was warm out, so you could smell it a bit when the breeze came by. All the sudden the crane would lift [the monkey] back up to the roof, and when the crane [came] back down, the monkey wasn’t there. We played lots of games like that.”

It became an inside joke among the workers. Bagen said that it was almost like a little mascot for the crew, and they got a kick out of keeping it from the suits.

“We even had the monkey up on a big sign that said, ‘Welcome to the Fleet Center’ for a while,” John said. “I’m not sure if anyone saw it, but it was kind of a joke for us. If they’re



*The above photo is dated May 1998, just like John's brother's photos.*



*John Bagen, next to his Ford Bronco, holding up the Boston Garden monkey in the garage of the Boston Garden in 1998.*



*John Bagen holds the monkey up in the garage of the Boston Garden in 1998.*

gonna come look for it, we're gonna keep 'em guessing."

John said the wreckers bounced the monkey around the site from place to place—that's when things started to get a bit fishy.

"I think it brings bad luck," John said. "It doesn't like being moved, I guess."

Once Bagen moved the monkey away from the historic arena, mysterious incidents began to follow it.

"The first night that I took him off the job, one of our building wreckers got his thumb caught in the crane cable and and pretty much mushed it," John said. "And a few hours later, I broke my thumb using the jackhammer. The same night, because we were working a long shift, [one of the other guys] had a sore shoulder. It was weird. Somebody said, 'It's because you took the monkey off the job.' So I brought it right back."

Eventually though, the Boston Garden demolition was done. Rather than dispose of the monkey, John kept the creature and brought it around to other Post 1421 building wrecker jobs. The misfortune followed.

"He was in my truck when I got rear-ended," John said. "I totally forgot he was there, and I drove the truck home. He was fine."

Even John's attempts to share the monkey with the Boston media were somehow hindered.

"Another time, I was going to bring him to the Opie and Anthony show on WBCN," Bagen said. "They said, 'Bring the strangest thing you've got.' But on the way there, the traffic was so bad that I didn't make it in on time."

Years passed, the Bruins and the Celtics became Fleet Center teams, and most Bostonians forgot about the mysterious monkey. John continued to share the animal and its story with friends.

"There have been lots of people who have seen it," John said. "People were calling me 'The Monkey Man.' I wasn't too crazy about that."

Eventually, the monkey made its way into John's basement in a cardboard box. Occasionally, John would take it out to show curious folks at the Weymouth Sons of Italy, where John is currently president.

And the Weymouth Sons of Italy is where, now, in 2015, John finally brought the monkey out again to put the legend to rest once and for all.

Well, sort of.

"I still have the head," John said. "I kept the monkey in a coffin-like box with holes in it. I think that some animals might have gotten to it. One day, I went back downstairs and the body was gone."



*The head is all that remains of the Boston Garden monkey in 2015.*

The monkey's head remains —although, these days, it looks more like just a skull.

"It's kind of a weird thing to have," he said.

If you recall, Joe Bearak, who was senior vice president of Morse Diesel in 1998, and was in charge of both the demolition of the old Garden and construction of the FleetCenter, said he'd never heard of a so-called Boston Garden monkey.

"Absolutely not," he said when Boston.com spoke with him in September. "I was in charge of the project, and believe me, I would have known. It's an urban legend. There were pigeons, there were rats, there were other things, but no monkeys."

We got back in touch with Bearak and shared our newfound information. While Bearak's tune hasn't changed, his amount of curiosity has. He said that he wasn't on site for the Boston



*John Bagen holds up the head of the Boston Garden monkey.*

Garden job as much as Post 1421 and NASD, who were overseeing most of the demo work.

"Maybe nobody ever told me," Bearak said. "Because, frankly, had they, I would've stopped the demo and I would've gotten people to come in and do a whole schtick about it. It's the only thing that makes sense from a PR standpoint."

As for John Bagen, he's retired from building wrecking now.

He looks back fondly on the Garden job, calling it, "an awesome job to do, one of the favorites of my career."



*John Bagen holds the monkey's head next to a photo of him holding the monkey upon its discovery in 1998.*

He said he's ready to retire the monkey head, as well. He plans to give the head a proper burial, this many years later. He also mentioned that he'd be open to selling it and putting the proceeds back into the Sons of Italy or donating the monkey head to the Garden on behalf of the Sons of Italy if the Garden were to show interest.

For now, he said he's just happy that the truth about the monkey is finally out there.

"Stories came and stories went," Bagen said. "But I don't know, I always thought there was a cool story here."

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Monday 02 November 2015

# Could Shakespeare's skull have been found? Why Church ruling means we may never know

## Clergymen hoping to take mystery skull for DNA testing see their application thrown out by Church lawyer



A portrait of William Shakespeare A portrait of William Shakespeare Photo: Alamy Photo: Alamy

Legend has it, it could be the skull of William Shakespeare - robbed from the playwright's grave to win a £300 bet.

But clergymen attempting to solve a centuries-old mystery over the identity of a lone skull found in a Worcestershire church vault have been thwarted by a senior church lawyer - who has barred them from carrying out DNA testing.

According to local folklore, the skull, in a vault beneath Sheldon chapel at St Leonard's Church in Beoley, Redditch, was stolen from the playwright's tomb in Stratford as part of a wager set by the art historian Horace Walpole in the 1700s.

Rev Paul Irving, vicar at St Leonard's, applied to the Church of England's Consistory Court for permission to temporarily remove the skull for DNA testing, as part of a new documentary investigation into the claims.

But the application, which was supported by other local clergymen, has been thrown out by Charles Mynors, Chancellor of the Diocese of Worcester, who ruled there was nothing to link the skull to Shakespeare.

The legend is based on two magazine articles, dated 1879 and 1884. The first claimed that in 1769 Walpole offered £300 to anyone who could obtain the skull of Shakespeare, who was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford and whose grave bears an epitaph cursing anyone who should attempt to move his bones.

It claimed that a Dr Frank Chambers broke into Shakespeare's tomb and stole the skull but then failed to persuade Walpole or any-one else to hand over money for it, so arranged for it to be returned to the tomb.

"The problem for us now is that the failure to conduct a detailed investigation will result in a higher level of uninformed speculation"



*St Leonard's Church, Beoley*

Rev Richard Clark, the Team Rector at Holy Trinity Redditch

However, the second article claimed that this was never done and that ultimately the skull was traced to the church at Beoley, about 15 miles from Stratford.

The author of the articles is not known but is thought may have Rev C J Langston, vicar of Beoley from 1881 to 1889.

In a judgment running to nearly 7,000 words, Chancellor Mynors, a barrister, sided with prominent Shakespeare scholars who have rubbished the claims and concluded they read “like a piece of Gothic fiction”.

He said he had seen “no scholarly or other evidence that comes anywhere near providing any support for the truth of the story” and that there was “nothing whatsoever to link it to William Shakespeare”

He concluded that "the curiosity as to the skull at Beoley has no factual base whatsoever to justify exhumation, removal or investigation”.



But Rev Richard Clark, the Team Rector at Holy Trinity Redditch, overseeing the parish including Beoley, said he was disappointed by the ruling and that without detailed investigation there was “absolutely no way that we can disprove” the “intriguing” theory that it could be Shakespeare’s.

He told the Telegraph: “There is this skull sitting there on its own and we would love to know who it is. The ideal for us would have been to get some DNA testing to try to match it up to see if it’s part of one of the skeletons that’s down there or who or what it might be.”

He said the Diocesan Advisory Committee had been happy with the plan and it was only the Diocesan Chancellor who objected.

“While I understand we don’t want people on fishing expeditions mucking about with human remains, the problem for us now is that the failure to conduct a detailed investigation will result in a higher level of uninformed speculation - whereas if we had the investigation done,

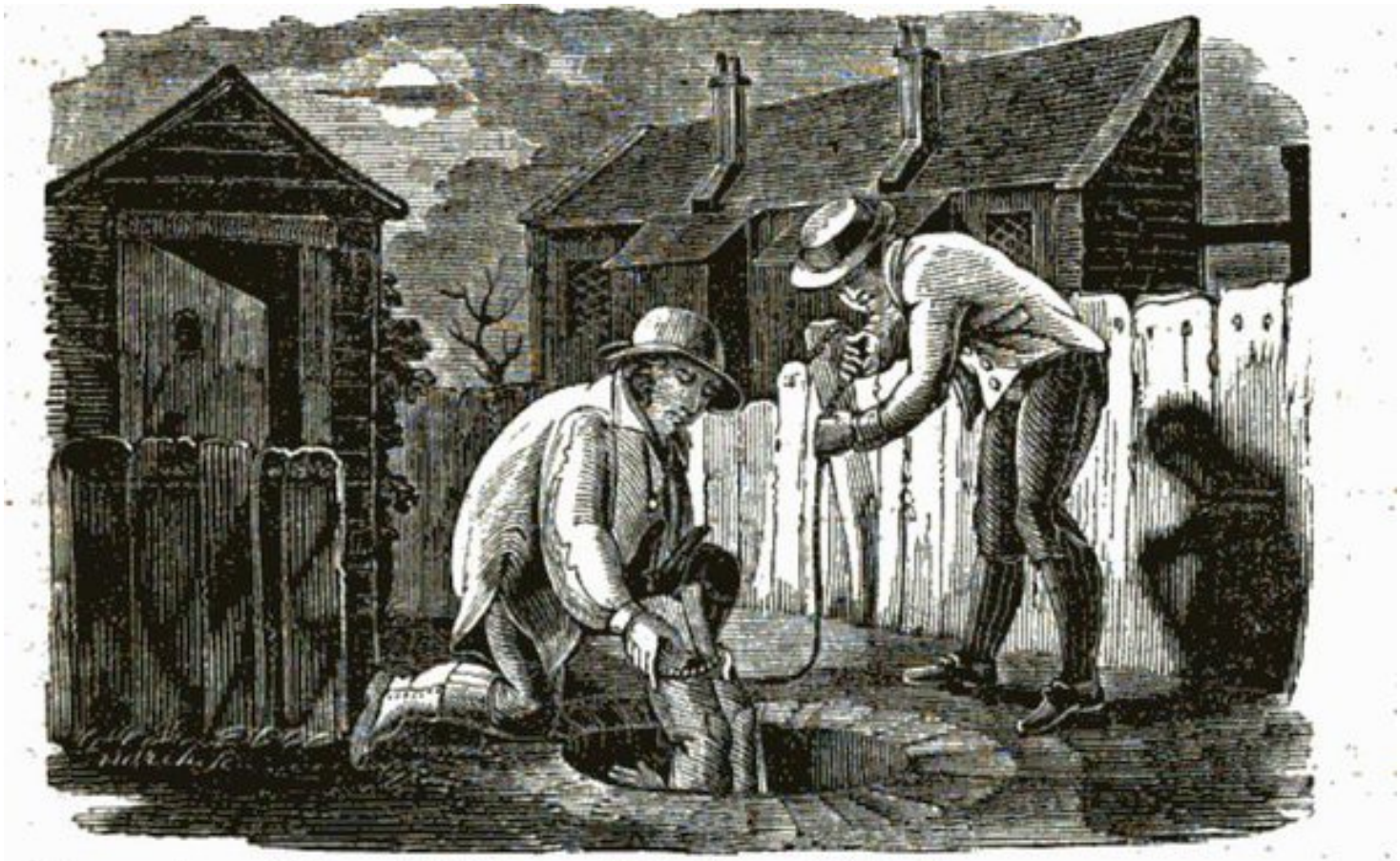
then it would settle the matter once and for all.”

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INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS OF DARE-DEVILS
WORLD'S CHAMPION
HELL DRIVERS

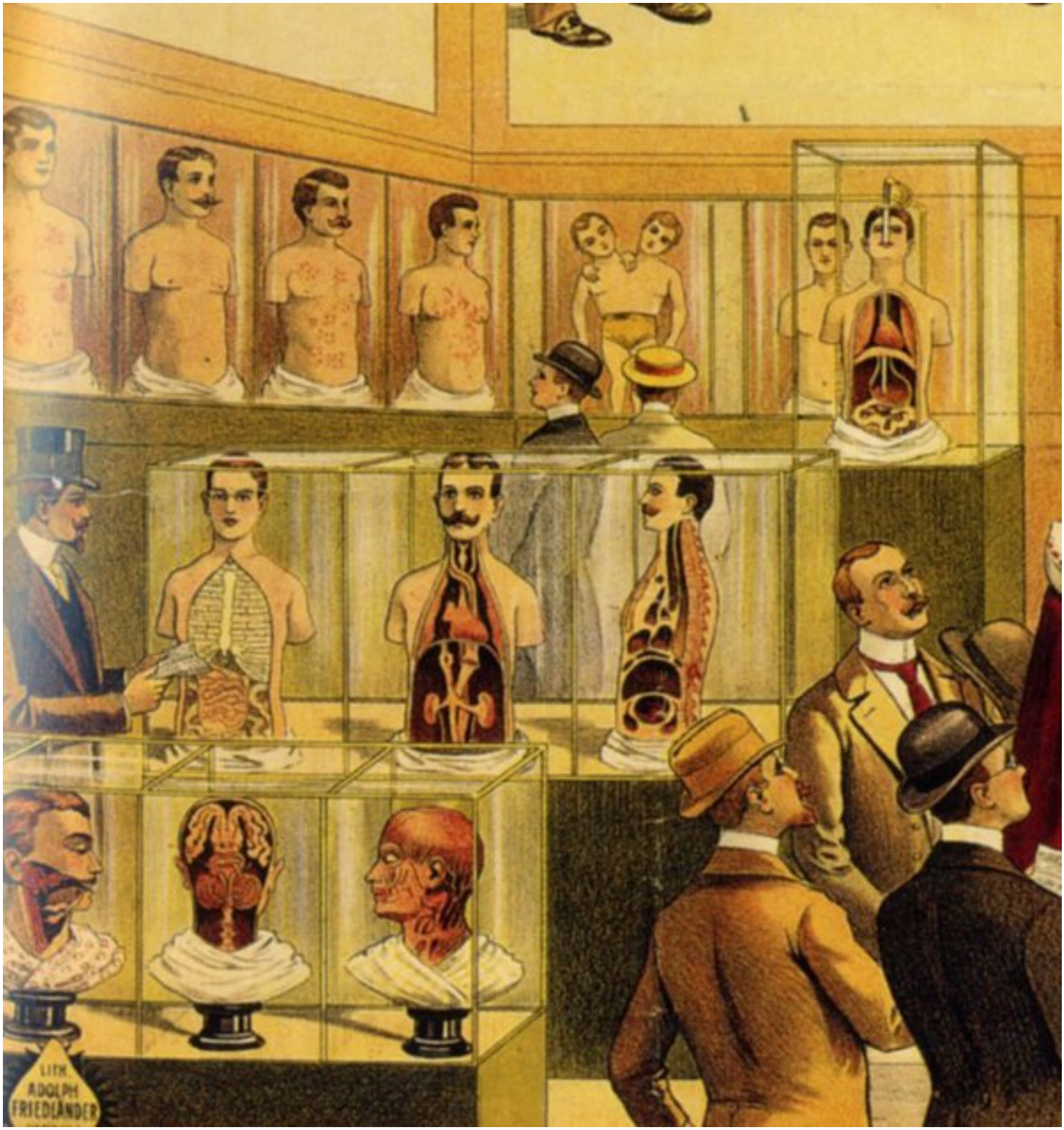

FOR
GOOD FORTUNE
CARRY THIS
LUCKY
COIN



*Bishop and Williams murdering the poor Italian Boy.*





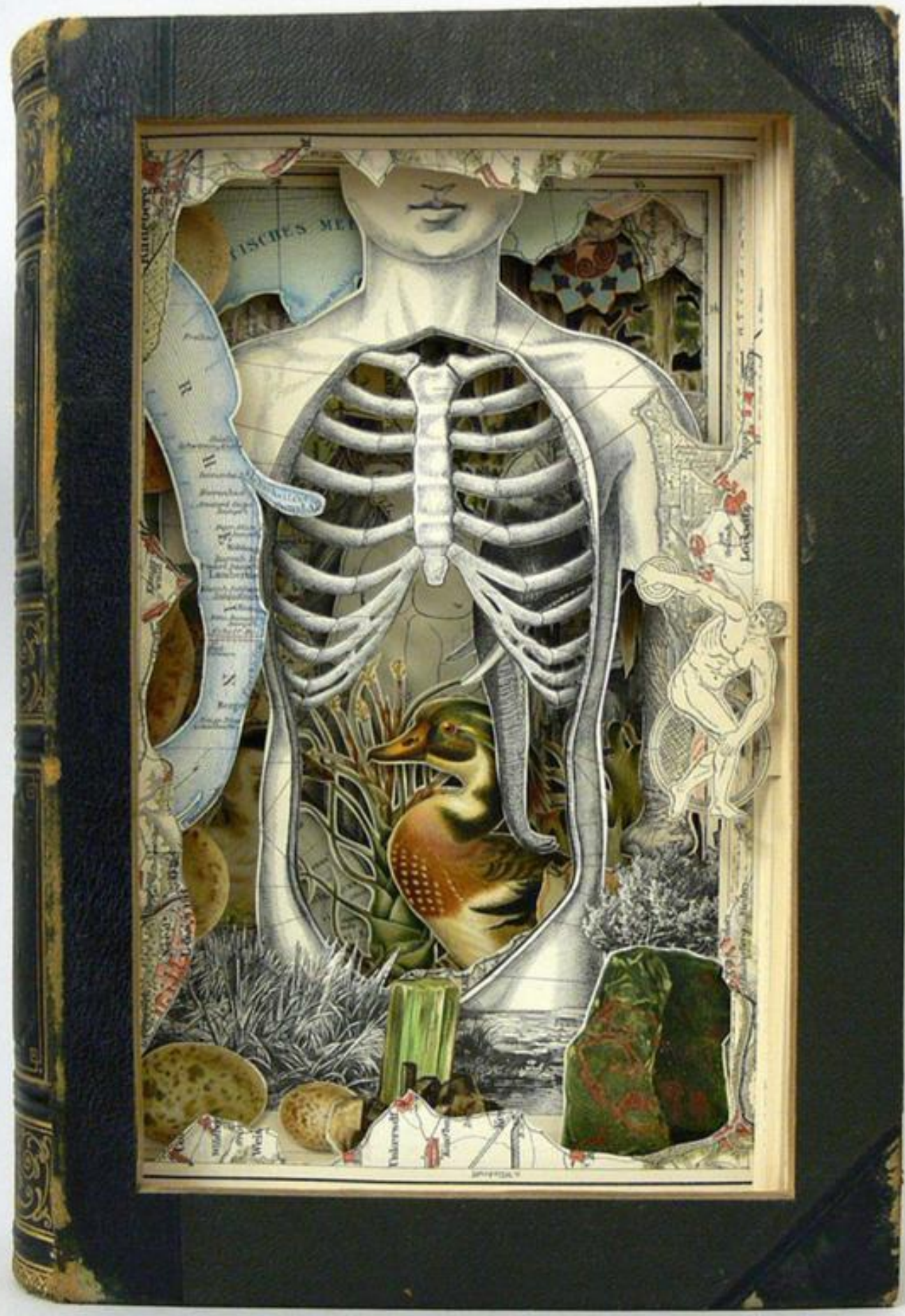

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J.HISLOP
UNDERTA


Wellcome Images

## *SEPARATE COMPARTMENTS FOR LADIES.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.

SIR,—I have read the letter from the Board of Trade to the Railway Companies on the subject of assaults on women with much interest, and I suggest that the Companies should issue directions compelling their servants to make a ladies' compartment if requested to do so.

There is a general idea that there is already a rule to this effect, but, unfortunately, it is by no means easy to get a ladies' compartment. I was travelling from Paddington to Cheltenham, in July, with my nurse and a young baby, and both the guard and the inspector positively refused to make a "Ladies only" for us. I was travelling third-class, but a lady in a second-class compartment hailed me, and said that she also desired a "Ladies only," and had also been refused. She and a gentleman were the only occupants of the carriage; so I settled matters by myself asking the gentleman to move, which he very politely did, and I, nurse, and baby entered our hardly-won refuge. Of course, they made us pay excess fare.

I am not afraid of men, but I do object to nurse my baby before a man (no doubt the man would also rather be spared), and I consider it a disgrace that ladies cannot obtain decent privacy without the trouble and expense I was put to.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

YOUNG MOTHER.

July 6.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.

SIR,—In the letter from the Board of Trade in *The Standard* of to-day, there is a sentence about our unwillingness to avail ourselves of separate accommodation provided for women travelling alone. My experience of carriages marked "Ladies only," has not been very happy, as most mothers and nurses with young children travel in them when going on a long journey. Only a little over three weeks ago I went to the English Lakes, and we had the Ladies' carriage full all the way, and three different sets of children in the course of the day. I think this may account for our apparent neglect of the privileges offered us by the Railway Companies occasionally.

When having to choose between the certainty of babies, and the remote possibility of rough or rude men, as fellow travellers, one is inclined to vote against the certainty.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A. M. F. D.

August 5.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.

SIR,—Great care must be taken in enforcing the word "only," for, as your Correspondent reminds us, children are not infrequently the ladies' companions. My wife and her maid lately travelled in a compartment "for ladies only," when the porter introduced a large portmanteau, which is also frequently a ladies' companion, but which seriously inconvenienced some at least of the passengers, and prevented their seeing or being seen by a lady who had arranged to meet them. Let ladies "only" be strictly enforced, and the "only" be ruled to mean not huge pormanteaus nor children (many of whom may be afflicted with contagious disorders), nor bicycles, which have become in these days ladies' inseparable companions.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

AN ELDERLY CLERGYMAN.

August 6.

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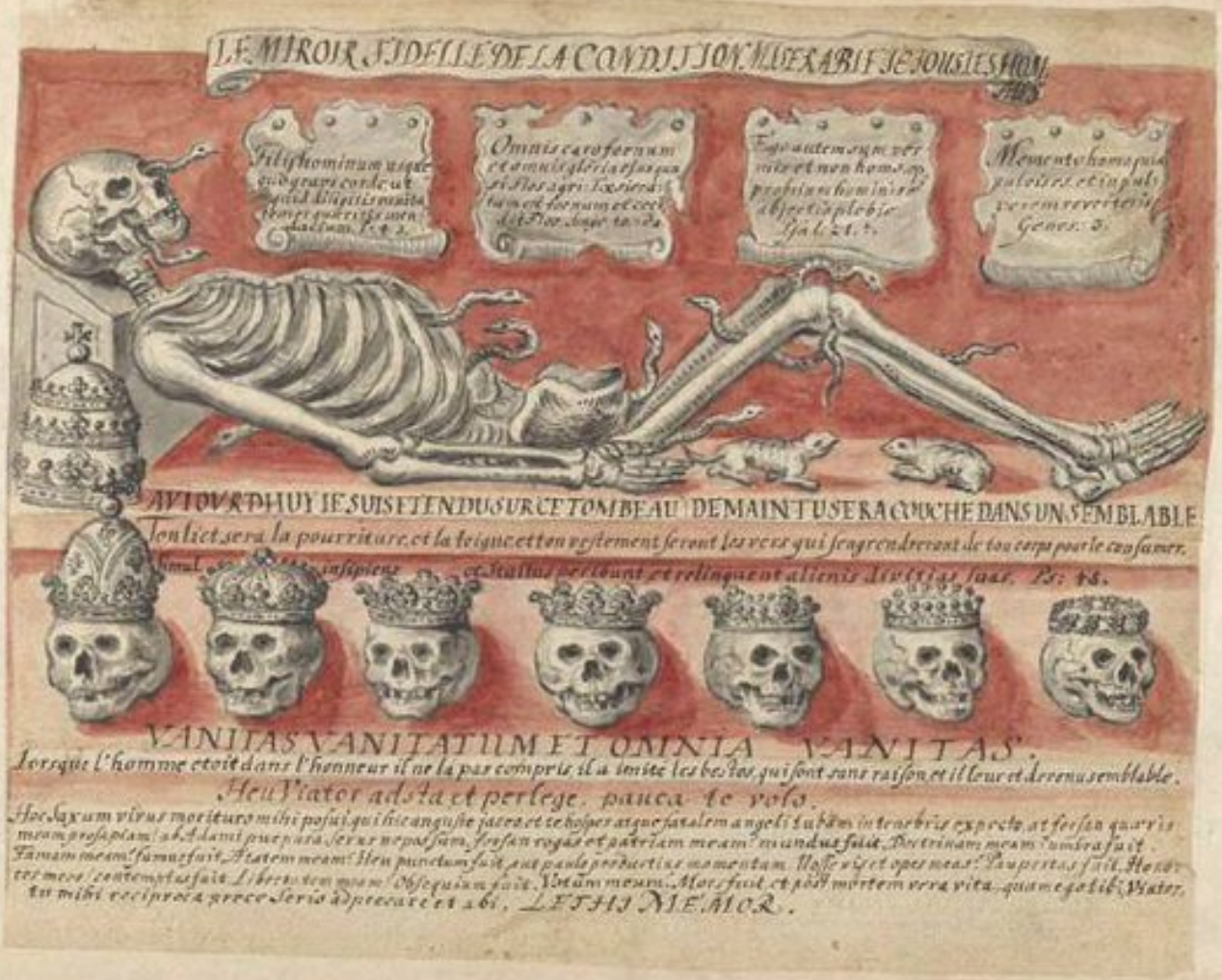
TO THE EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.

SIR,—In reference to your Leader of yesterday, I would venture to suggest that a simple and inexpensive means of diminishing the risk of outrage to passengers would be to cut a small opening in each compartment partition, leaving it unglazed, but with a wire grating.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. J. S.

August 6.




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Wellcome Images

## *To the EDITOR of the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.*

Sir,—A letter under the above head appeared in the *Guardian* of Saturday last signed *Charity*. The writer seems to take a very narrow view of the movement which some ministers, and several benevolent and well-meaning laymen, are endeavouring to establish for the prevention of drunkenness. He should bear in mind, that the gin palaces in our streets, with their brilliant lights and splendid paintings and decorations (and in some cases music), are a great temptation to a large class of wavereers. There are hundreds, yes, thousands, of persons induced to go into them, who, were there not such places, would not drink spirits at all. I have seen, creeping out of them, respectable-looking females, and the wives of working men, persons who, I know, would be ashamed of being seen in a public-house. They afford a readier access than most public-houses do; and then they have their folding doors, which close so quickly, that persons may pass in and out without being noticed.—I am, sir, yours respectfully, J.

Manchester, 23d Feb. 1848.



The ancient *Britons* ſhaved all their beard away ſave that growing on the upper Lip, which was ever attributed to their Barbariſme.



The *Hungarians* ſhave their Beards and leave nothing but the Muſtachoes, the which are ſometimes very long.



The *Tartars* ſhave their upper Lips, and warre with the *Perſians* for not doing ſo.

*Theſe men offer a great indignity and deſpight to Nature, to deprive the upper Lip of its naturall Ornament, which among*



Inhabitants of *Virginia*, whoſe haire is generally black, the men weare halfe their Beards ſhaven, the other halfe long, for Barbers they uſe their women, who with two ſhels will grate away the haire of any faſhion they pleaſe.



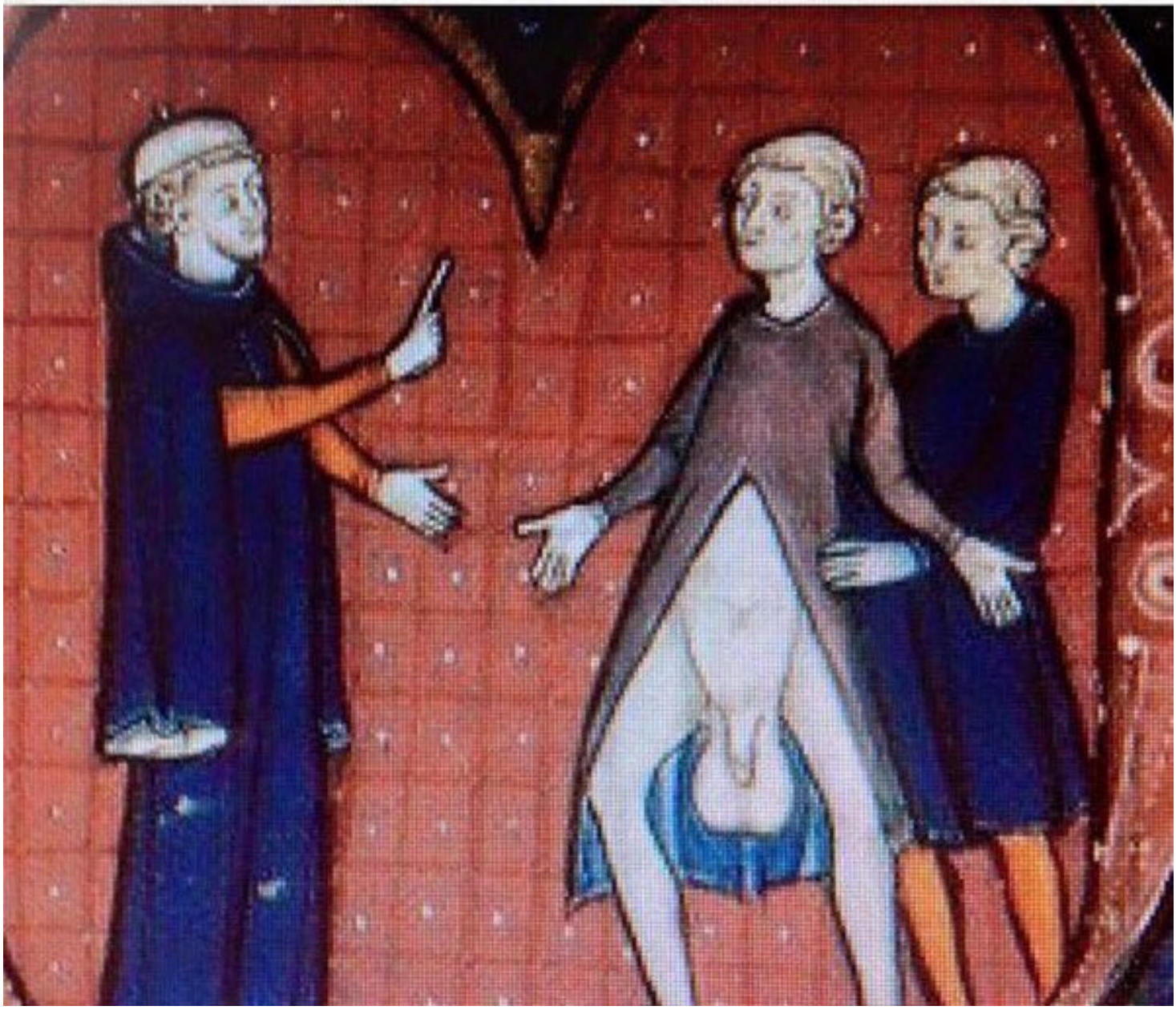
In the Kingdome of *Mancy* in great *India*, there men have Beards as it were Cats.



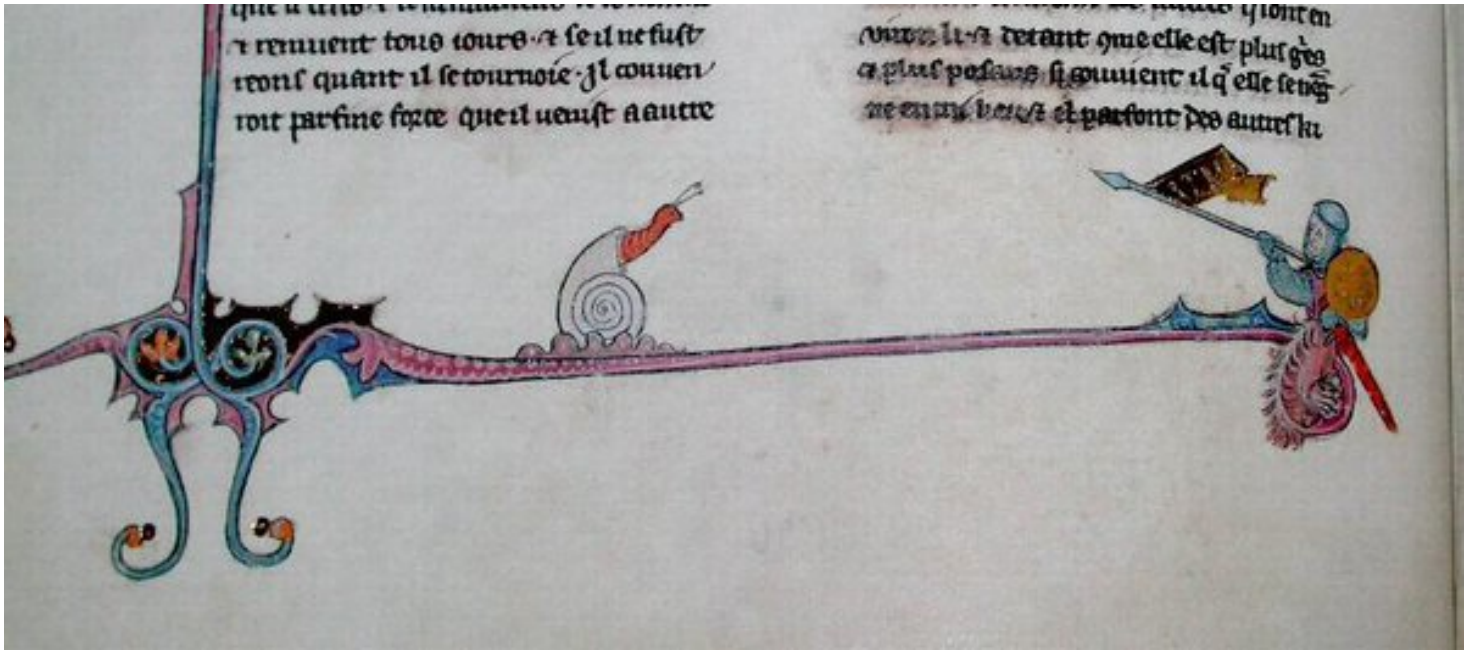
A little too indulgent of a Beard are the *Germans*, who affect a prolix Beard, inſomuch as ſome of them have been ſeen to have had their Beards ſo long, that they would reach unto their feet, which they



When your parents won't let you go out because your outfit is too revealing










Scharf-
sinn
Witz
Witz.
Erziehungsfaehigkeit.
Ort ..... Sin
Farben-
sinn
Zahlen.
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IOSI PIIO . BARTHOL
ARCHIDIACONO . MELITA
SCOPO . TYANAE . RENVNCIAT
PROBITATE . MANSVETVDINE
IRTVTIBVS . PRAESTANTI . OLIM . VICARIO . EPISCOP
APITVLARI . OVI . PHILOSOPHIAE . THEOLOGIAE . IVRIS . PROFESSVS . DOCE
N . LICEO . MELITENSI . PLVRES . ANNOS . DISSIDIA . DIRIMENDO
ONSVLENDO . IVVANDO . LITES . ASSIDVA . MENTIS . CONTENTIONE
PACANDO . VITA . IMPENSA . HONORIFICE . ELATVS
ONFECTVS . OECVBVIT . SVMMEQVE . INDIGENIS . ADVENIS . RELIQVIT
MIRIPICVM . SVI . DESIDERIVM . AD . PERPETVAM . MERITO
VIRO . OPTIMO . INCOMPARABILI . BENEVOLENTISSIMI
VM . EIVS . SVIOVE . ANIMI . MAITLAND . PRAEFECTVS
MEMORIAM . THOMAS . CVNCTISQVE . INTRA . MARE
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QUÆ·ET·MARMOR·HOCINDE·SEGMENTARI·CUDI
AC·MEMORIÆ·PERENNITATI·STERNI CURAVI
ANN. MDCCCXXXII·
SIMON PLACIDO ROMÆ IN UTROQUE IURE, AC IN SCRIBENDI
LEPORE SCITE INSTRUCTUS, IBIQUE PLAUDENTIBUS
ARCHIGYMNASII URBIS AETERNÆ PATRIBUS, DOCTOR
NUNCUPATUS, AD PATRIAM REDIIT, ANNUIS SUFFRAGIIS NULLO
FAVORE CAPTATIS, CONTINUO S. OFFICII CONSULTOR, ET
CURIÆ EPISCOPI ASSESSOR RENUNCIATUS EST. AMISSA
VIDUATUS COMPARE, AC ORDINI MANCIPATUS SACERDOTII
AB FR. VINCENTIO LAHNI EMO. EPISCOP. MELITÆ, AC ARCHI
EPISCOPI PRIMO IN SACR. ECCLESIÆ CATHEDR. CANONICORUM
COLLEGIUM COOPTATUS, EIQUE IN VISITATIONUM DIOECESIS
LABORIBUS, AC CURIS SOCIATUS, DEIN AD DIFFICILLIMA
VICARIATUS CENSIS MUNIA QUE OLIM DOMI PENITUS SUMTA
CUM LAUDE SUSTINUIT, ACCITUS EST AD QUO VITA FUNCTO
FERDINANDUS MATTEI EPISC. AC ARCHIEP. SALUTATUS
SIMONEM IN MUNERIS EIUSDEM CONSORTEM ADSCIVIT, ET DECANATUS
EIUSDEM ECCLESIÆ DIGNITATE DECORARI SATEGIT. AB
SUMMA PETITUS DE NON SEMEL NON IISDEM SUPERNUMERO
IN GRAVISSIMIS NEGOTIIS DELEGATUS, NITIDE, DOCTE
PROFUNDE SCRIPSIT, AC AREAM CUM PLAUSU PROBATUS EST
DOMUM PLAM OBIVIT INTEGRAM, PACATAM, DIUTURNAM
SUI GENNARIO MAJORI, DIE XII. MARTII AN. MDCCCXXX


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Vital records

Snyder, William -1854

[Born in Cincinnati, O. Died or buried Jan. 11, 1854, aged 13 years, 6 months]

Killed by being swung around by the heels by a circus clown.

Buried in Yerba Buena cemetery, San Francisco, Cal., grave no. 3240.





DE nouuelle Albyon
Sil vous en plaist escouter
Son fayt et mon cõmancemẽ
Alchez qua mon retõner
Ils este xca la mer
De ceu a joyeuse chere




Moyen dotonné pour examiné la gorge d'une femme nerveuse.

Wellcome Images

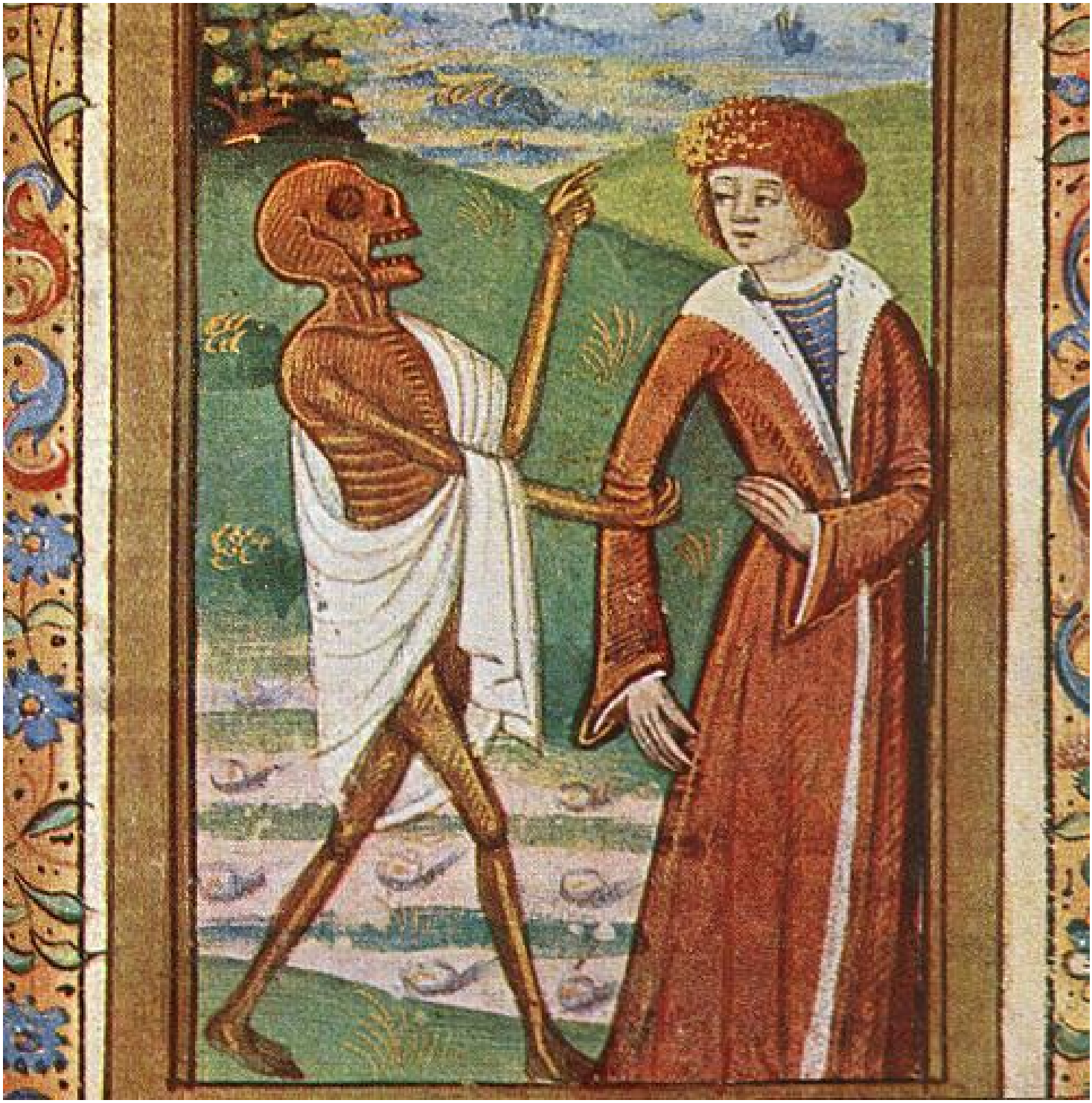

Vient au Sabbat
Sortie Parve Rat


HALLOWEEN

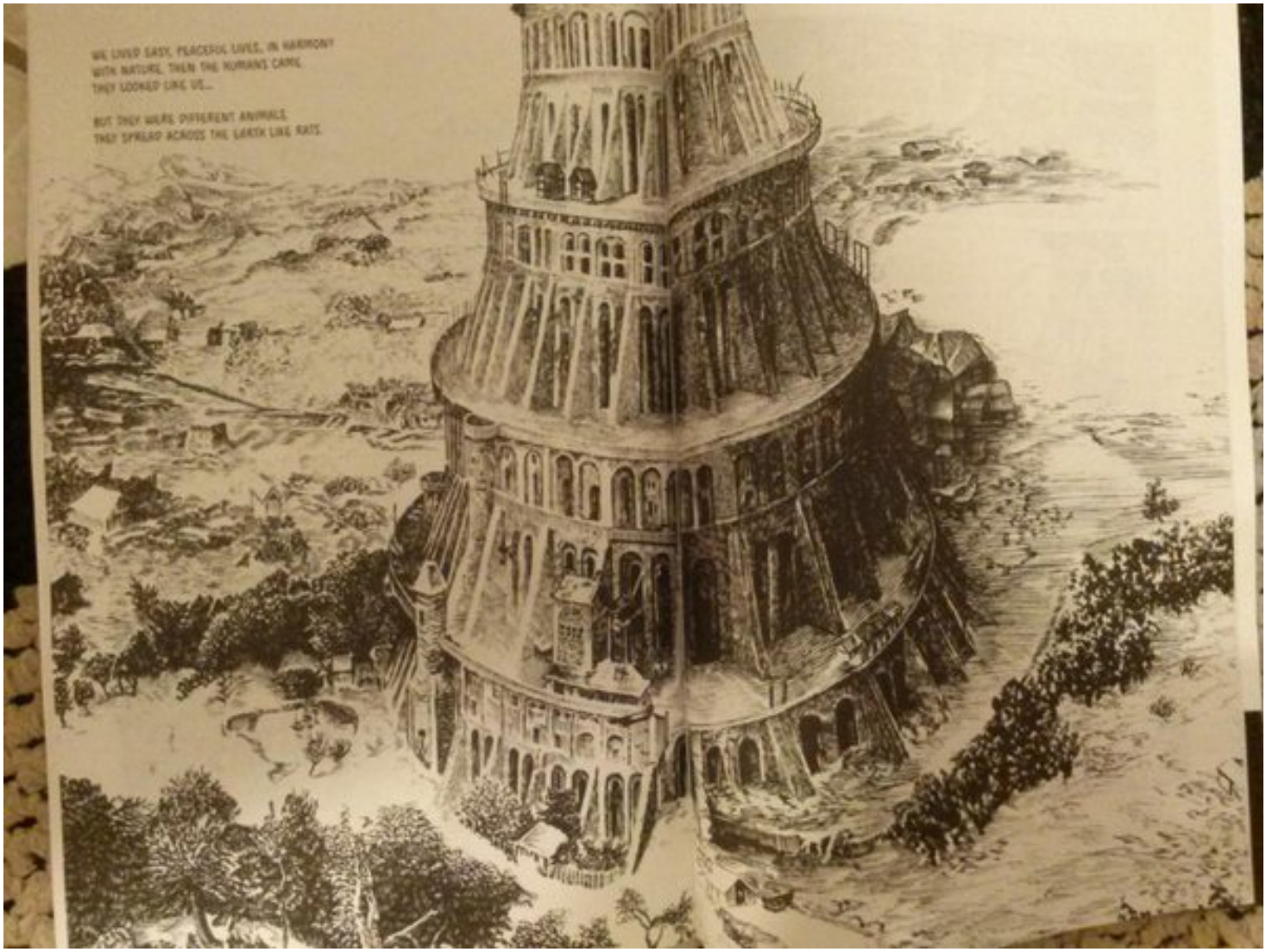

Rembrandt
f 1639




© Brian T McElherron






WE LIVED EASY, PEACEFUL LIVES, IN HARMONY
WITH NATURE. THEN THE HUMANS CAME.
THEY LOOKED LIKE US...
BUT THEY WERE DIFFERENT ANIMALS.
THEY SPREAD ACROSS THE EARTH LIKE RATS.

haurbonis proficere tollere preadefiguram mundi depingamus vitam quaerendo finiram




Wellcome Images


pachomi abb.



**Monday, February 25, 2013**

**"THE MAN WHO GOT AWAY"**
**The Demise of George "Bugs" Moran**

Most famously known as the man who narrowly escaped death at the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929, George Moran had ended up with the North Side mob almost by accident since he managed to outlive all of his friends. But Moran's power was broken by the massacre and he eventually drifted away from Chicago and died in prison on February 25, 1957. It was a forgettable moment for the man who once challenged the reign of Al Capone.



**George "Bugs" Moran**

George "Bugs" Moran was born Alelard Cunin in Minnesota in 1891, the son of a French stone mason named Jules Cunin, and his wife, Marie. His father was later recalled as a mean-tempered man and the two never got along, although he and his mother stayed on good terms throughout this life. He ran away in 1910 and adopted the name of George Moran. He became involved with a gang of young toughs who began specializing in stealing horses. In 1912, Moran was arrested for the first time. He spent several stints in jail after that for other crimes, including larceny and burglary.

Moran made friends in Joliet Correctional Center and began hanging around the North Side after his release. One day, Moran was listening to a speech given by an outdoor orator and became annoyed when a man in the crowd started heckling him. Moran confronted the heckler and a fight broke out. As a result, Moran's chest and neck were badly slashed with a knife and he spent the rest of his life wearing high-neck collars to hide the scars. His nickname of "Bugs" was probably created by newspaper writers (as most gangsters' more colorful handles were) but it was noted that Moran had a fiery temper, which led to the moniker.

Following the knife attack, and after recuperating for several weeks in the hospital, Moran began hanging around McGovern's, a cabaret at 666 North Clark Street, where Dean O'Banion worked as a singing waiter. Many criminals who were just starting out hung around the place and Moran became friends with many of them, including O'Banion. The two began working together, robbing warehouses, with other members of what would become the North Side gang. After one fouled-up job, Moran was captured. He kept his silence and served two years in Joliet without implicating O'Banion in the crime. After he was released, he went back to work with his friend. He was soon captured again and, once more, he kept silent about who he worked with. He stayed in jail this time until 1923.

When Moran got out the last time, he joined back up with O'Banion's now formidable North Side gang. They had become a powerful organization, supplying liquor to Chicago's wealthy Gold Coast. Moran became a valuable asset, hijacking liquor trucks at will. He became known as O'Banion's right hand man, always impeccably dressed, right down to the two guns that he always wore.

Moran fell in love with a showgirl who had recently arrived in America from Turkey. Her name was Lucille Bilezikdijan and she had a child from a previous relationship, which she feared would turn Moran away from her. Instead, he raised the boy as his own and not long after, he fathered his own child with Lucille. Like so many other gangster wives, Lucille averred that her husband was, "one of the best men she had ever known."

After O'Banion was murdered, Moran served as one of his pallbearers – and then as one of his avengers. He took part – along with Hymie Weiss and Vincent Drucci – in several assassination attempts on Capone and in January 1925, was the first man to fire a bullet into John Torrio outside his South Side apartment building (see earlier blog post).

Moran was identified in the Torrio hit by the 17-year-old son of the apartment building's janitor, Peter Veesaert, who had been standing in the doorway of the building at the time of the attack. He was shown some photographs that were taken by the police during Dean O'Banion's funeral and he pointed out George Moran as the first man who shot Torrio. Bravely, he insisted that his identification was correct when he was brought face-to-face with Moran after he was arrested. "You're the man," Peter said. The police wanted to hold Moran until they could establish some evidence in support of the boy's identification but Judge William Lindsay released him under $5,000 bail. He was never indicted for the crime.

Moran continued to take part in the attempts to kill Capone – and continued burying his friends who were slain in the Chicago violence. In time, by blood and attrition, he became the leader of the North Side gang and was just as relentless against Capone's business efforts as O'Banion, Weiss and Drucci had been. On the highway between Detroit and Chicago, they hijacked trucks of liquor that had been shipped to Capone by the Purple Gang. They bombed saloons that exclusively sold his beer. They had assisted Joe Aiello when he had reclaimed the liquor stills of Little Italy. The North Side gang had attempted twice to kill Capone's favorite gunman, Jack McGurn. The second time, the Gusenberg brothers had caught up with him in a telephone booth at the Hotel McCormick and emptied a Tommy gun through the

glass. Major surgery and a long recovery in the hospital saved his life. The gang even started their own dog racing tracks. Moran opened a track in Southern Illinois while his business manager, Adam Heyer, opened the Fairview Kennel Club in Cicero, not far from Capone's Hawthorne Kennel Club – which was set on fire during a terrorist attack. In late 1928, Moran became entrenched with the Master Cleaners' and Dyers' Association, a blatant challenge to Capone. He managed to get control of an independent plant, the Central Cleaning Company, and installed two of his men, Willie Marks and Al Weinshank, as vice-presidents. In short, Moran took every opportunity to provoke Capone, both on the streets and in the newspapers, where he often publicly blamed Capone for local violence.

Just days before the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, Moran was contacted and asked to be at the garage on North Clark Street where the massacre occurred. He arrived a few minutes late and, seeing what he believed were police cars outside, was at a nearby coffee shop when his friends were slaughtered. He narrowly missed being killed and to this day, many historians believe that Al Weinshank was mistaken for Moran by the lookouts for the assassins. The massacre was a simple, cold-bloodedly efficient assassination that was meant to kill George Moran and break the back of the North Side gang, opening up its territories and operations to Al Capone. But they missed Moran and from that point on, he was known as "the man who got away."


THREE CENTS THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS BLUE STREAK

MASSACRE 7 OF MORAN GANG

KILLING SCENE TOO GRUESOME FOR ONLOOKERS

VICTIMS ARE LINED AGAINST WALL; ONE VOLLEY KILLS ALL

Although the St. Valentine's Massacre greatly diminished the power of George Moran and the North Side gang, it did not completely destroy it. Moran managed to keep control of most of his territory and what remained of his gang through the end of Prohibition and into the early 1930s. But with the repeal of Prohibition, the North Side gang declined along with almost everyone else and Moran decided to leave Chicago.

Many crime writers believe that Moran's biggest liability as a gang boss was Moran himself ---he was simply not very smart in the ways of long-term survival as a mob leader. While Capone was a master at planning his operations several steps in advance (thanks to his mentoring by Torrio), Moran operated almost like an ordinary street fighter, doing everything by cause and effect. So, having been squeezed out of Chicago at the end of Prohibition, he reverted back to his early life of pulling common crimes like safecracking and robbery. Moran went from being one of the wealthiest gangsters in Chicago to a penniless crook in less than two decades.



**Moran toward the end of his life**

In July 1946, Moran was arrested in Ohio for robbing a bank messenger of $10,000, a paltry sum compared to his ill-gotten gains during the Prohibition days. He was convicted and sentenced to ten years in the Ohio Penitentiary. Shortly after his release, Moran was again arrested for an earlier bank raid, receiving another ten-year sentence, this time in Leavenworth. Only a matter of days after arriving there, most of which were spent in the prison hospital, Moran died of lung cancer on February 25, 1957. He was buried in the prison cemetery.

While at the height of his career in Chicago, Moran was quoted as saying, “I hope when my time comes that I die decently in bed. I don’t want to be murdered and left for dead beside the garbage cans in some Chicago alley.” And he didn’t – he died lonely and mostly forgotten in a prison hospital bed. And one has to wonder, if he’d had the chance, would he have changed his mind about his choice?

**The story of George Moran, the North Side Mob, Capone and the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre is chronicled in my book BLOOD, GUNS & VALENTINES, which is available in print from the website and as a Kindle edition.**

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:17 AM

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*Killer Luka Magnotta*

November 8, 2015

**Deranged Porn Star Who Mailed Body Parts Of His Murder Victim To Schools Says He Loves Prison**

A deranged killer and ex-porn star, Luka Magnotta, is serving a life sentence for murdering a man and mailing his body parts to elementary schools and political offices. However, it seems that Magnotta isn't having the experience in prison that many had hoped. The killer claims he "loves" prison, and likens it to a "university setting."



*<img src="http://cdn.inquisitr.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Killer-lives-luxury-life-in-Canada-prison.png"*

*Inside Edition* reports that 33-year-old Luka Magnotta was convicted of murdering 33-year-old Jun Lin before dismembering his body. As if the murder itself was not gruesome enough, the deranged former porn star then sent the body parts to elementary schools, political offices, and strangers. The murder caused international outrage, as Lin was a Chinese student attending school in Montreal when he was murdered by Magnotta. A manhunt ensued, and Magnotta was eventually arrested in Berlin on murder charges. The sick and twisted killer also videotaped the murder and posted it online before police ever found him or the body. The gruesome video of Magnotta dismembering the body of Lin was eventually taken down after the website realized the murder was real.

Magnotta was sentenced to life in prison for the horrific slaying, but seems to be enjoying his life in the Archambault Institution, where he is incarcerated. In fact, in recent letters obtained by the *Toronto Sun*, Magnotta talks about prison, calling it similar to a "university setting." He says that his door is open 90 percent of the time, which mimics that of a university setting. He goes on to say that he spends his free time enjoying music, art, reading, suntanning, and sports.

> "I just bought Celine Dion's album and a lot of others. I have a stereo and a portable for when I suntan outside."

The friends receiving the letters, which they provided to the *Toronto Sun*, note that Magnotta

hasn't expressed any remorse for killing Lin. In fact, he hasn't mentioned it at all. Instead, he spends his time discussing his laid back life in the prison where he will spend the rest of his days. As the report points out, it isn't just the letters that have many questioning why this convicted killer is living such a posh life. The publication also secured photos of Magnotta inside the prison, which show him relaxing in his personal clothing, which included sunglasses and Versace shirt.

It was noted that his prison "cell" looked more like a dorm room, with posters and art plastered over the walls. It also appears that Magnotta is making quick friends in prison. In some photographs, he is surrounded by other inmates, including pedophile Jonathan Lafrance-Rivard. The posed photographs look like something that would be posted on social media, not that of an inmate serving a life term for the horrific murder and dismemberment of another man.

The prison responded to questions regarding the attire worn by Magnotta in prison, noting that inmates are allowed to wear their own clothing so long as it is "approved" by the prison staff. Regarding the other issues such as the time spent sunbathing, reading, doing art, and listening to music, the Correctional Service of Canada would not comment on Magnotta specifically. However, they did note in an apparent e-mail to the *Sun* that inmates are allowed "certain amenities such as TVs and stereos."

What do you think about Luka Magnotta's apparent lifestyle in the Canada correctional facility? Does it surprise you that an inmate doing time for such a horrific murder would describe his time in prison as similar to a "university setting" or "summer camp?"

[Image via Luka Magnotta Official Website]

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# Egypt detects 'impressive' anomaly in Giza pyramids

ap.org

By MARAM MAZEN
Nov. 9, 2015 10:49 AM EST
CAIRO

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's Antiquities Ministry says a scanning project in the Giza pyramids has identified thermal anomalies, including one in the largest pyramid, built by Cheops, known locally as Khufu.

The ministry says in a statement Monday that the first phase of the scanning has shown "a particularly impressive one (anomaly) located on the Eastern side of the Khufu pyramid."

The thermal scanning was carried out during sunrise, as the sun heats the structures from the outside, and then during sunset as the pyramids are cooling down. The speed of the heating and cooling phases was used to uncover "hypotheses" such as empty areas in the pyramids, internal air currents, or different building materials used.

The structures are over 4,500 years old.

AP News | © 2015 Associated Press |

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# English Teacher Claims Jack the Ripper's Real Identity Was Poet Francis Thompson

Posted on November 9, 2015 in TRENDING // 0 Comments



Written by: Alexis Sostre on November 9, 2015.

England's most notorious serial killer may have been renowned poet Francis Thompson, according to one teacher who claims to have cracked the century-old murder mystery.

Thompson penned poetry by day and butchered prostitutes by night under the guise of legendary murderer Jack the Ripper, Australian teacher Richard Patterson claims.

The 45-year-old educator says research from an exhaustive 20-year study shows the artist is the legendary culprit behind the grisly 1888 slays of five London prostitutes during a 10-week killing spree.

Thompson, from Preston, Lancashire, had surgical experience and hinted at his double life in some of his poems in which he talked about killing people, Patterson told the Mirror.

He "kept a dissecting knife under his coat, and he was taught a rare surgical procedure that was found in the mutilations of more than one of the Ripper victims," the researcher said.

"He helped with surgery and is known to have cut up heaps and heaps of cadavers while a student," Patterson added.

Thompson was also addicted to opium and had "close links" to at least one East London prostitute.

Patterson believes "The Hound of Heaven" writer snapped after a relationship with a local prostitute went sour.

“Soon before and soon after the murders, he wrote about killing female prostitutes with knives,” the author said.

hompson details the bloody murder of a woman stabbed at a pagan temple by a young poet in his short story, “Finis Coronat Opus.”

“I swear I struck not the first blow. Some violence seized my hand, and drove the poniard down. Whereat she cried ; and I, frenzied, dreading detection, dreading, above all, her wakening, I struck again, and again she cried ; and yet again, and yet again she cried,” reads an excerpt from the 1889 piece.

The man in the poem hears the “sound of dripping blood” as the dying woman’s eyes glare at him in her last moments of life.

“Motionless with horror they were fixed on mine, motionless with horror mine were fixed on them, as she wakened into death,” the poem says.

Many along the years have been suspected of being the real Ripper, including a 23-year-old Polish immigrant named Aaron Kosminski, artist Walter Sickert and even Lizzie Williams, the wife of royal physician Sir John Williams.



English poet Francis Thompson (1859 – 1907) wrote “The Hound of Heaven” and other works. A researcher claims he’s behind the legendary Jack the Ripper murders.

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# Extraordinary, terrible, and totally "true" tales of people who were buried alive



By strangeremains *on* October 24, 2015



*Antoine Wiertz painting entitled Premature Burial. Image credit: Wikipedia*

Taphophobia (*taphos* meaning grave and *phobos* meaning fear) is the fear of being buried alive and it permeated Europe and America in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was especially bad during cholera and small pox epidemics because people believed some illnesses could leave them in a state that mimicked death. Americans and Europeans even purchased safety (or security) coffins and used waiting mortuaries to avoid being buried alive.

Taphophobia was reinforced by fictional stories like Edgar Allan Poe's "The Premature Burial" and newspaper articles that were purportedly true. Even doctors reported that they had exhumed graves of people who had been buried alive because it looked like the bodies had moved in the coffins, but this was before forensic scientists understood what happens to a corpse during decomposition.

Most of the newspaper accounts ended in tragedy, but in some stories people survived premature burial because grave robbers played unwitting heroes – probably one of the few times grave robbers were portrayed in a positive light. Nearly all of these supposedly factual reports were based on local urban legends and unverifiable rumors from other countries.

Below are some extraordinary "true" stories of people who were buried alive, starting with one of the earliest I could find.

**The Pennsylvania Gazette February 24, 1729**

> A Milkwoman's Daughter at Endfield was
>
> lately buried alive there: When she was going
>
> to be interred, some People at the Funeral,
>
> thought she looked fresh, and taking a Looking-
>
> glass, and applying it to her Lips, they fancied
>
> they perceived a Dew on it as from Breath;

but the cruel Mother mock'd and reviled them,
and swore she should be buried, and so she was;
but this coming to the Ears of a near Relation,
he got the Grave dug up, and the Coffin open'd,
when she was found with her Knees drawn up,
and the Nosegay in her Hand bitten to pieces,
struggling for Life. A Surgeon was sent for to
bleed her, but it was then too late.

**Newbern Sentinel April 3, 1819**

**Extraordinary Occurrence.**

***Extract of a letter from Bavaria***

"We have witnessed a superb funeral of
the Baron Hornstein, a Courtier; but the
result is what induces me to mention it in
my letter. Two days after, the workmen
entered the mausoleum, when they wit-
nessed an object which petrified them!
At the door of the sepulcher lay a body
covered with blood—it was the mortal
remains of this favorite of courts and prin-
ces. The Baron was buried alive! On
recovering from his trance he had forced
the lid of the coffin, and endeavoured to
escape from a charnel house—it was im-
possible! and therefore, in a fit of desper-

ation, as it is supposed, he dashed his brains out against the wall. The royal family, and indeed the whole city, are plunged in grief at the horrid catastrophe."

**Vermont Phoenix January 27, 1837**

**Terrible**.— A foreign paper gives an account of a melancholy case of premature internment, which, we hear, lately took place in Hermannstadt in Transylvania… Lieutenant Colonel Elsasser, Auditor General of that city, was attacked with cholera, which apparently proved fatal, and the body was soon after deposited in a tomb, without any particular examination having taken place. On succeeding to his estate, his heirs missed from his personal effects, a valuable ring, which had been an heir loom in the family for several generations, and accused a favorite servant of having obtained possession of it. The servant denied the theft, and said that his master always wore it on his finger, and that it was undoubtedly buried with him. They there-

fore determined to open the tomb, to assure themselves of the fact, but their astonishment and horror may be imagined, when they ascertained from the strongest evidence that the Colonel had been buried alive; he having afterwards turned himself in his coffin, and had actually devoured the flesh from his arms, through hunger, before he died a dreadful death!

**The New Bloomfield, PA Times March 15, 1881**

**Buried Alive.**

From Bucharist there comes a remarkable story illustrating an assurance which, it is to be feared is too often the case, and for which there is no remedy except legislation of a proper character. A young lady died of small-pox, and according to the sanitary laws of Roumania she was buried at once. As she had been recently betrothed the presents of her lover were buried with her, according to the Roumanian custom. These presents consisted of jewels and they excited the cupidity of three robbers, who went to the grave at night and dug up the coffin. When it

was opened one of the robbers was afraid to touch the corpse, whereat his fellows jeered at him. At this he gave the head of the corpse a sound cuffing and let it drop. At the next instant the dead woman arose and said, “Don’t kill me, I beg you.” Naturally the robbers fled and the unfortunate girl arose and, crawling from her grave, went home and was received with mingled terror and joy.

**The Wichita Beacon January 2, 1904**

**WAS BURIED ALIVE**

**Experiences of Man Supposed To Have Died**

Independence, Mo. Jan. 2.— George Hayword, a manufacturing jeweler, died here recently. He was 82 years of age. Until two weeks ago he was strong and worked every day at his trade. Mr. Hayward when a young man in England was buried alive.

This is the story of his startling experience as told by Mr. Hayward:

“It was in Marshville, County of

Gloucester, England, where I was
buried. While helping to haul straw one
day by accident I was struck in the
head with a pitchfork. It penetrated
my skull and made me feel faint and
dizzy. Two doctors were called. One
of them insisted that my condition
was due to a blow on the head and the
other that I had pleurisy…
two weeks elapsed and my eyes closed
in supposed death…
Yet I was painfully conscious of
every movement going around…

As soon as the undertaker arrived I
knew I was to be buried alive…

Well the time for the funeral ar-
rived and then the burial.
Suddenly the shoveling ceased and the
silence of the tomb was complete. I
did not seem to have the fear then that
a person would naturally expect under
such circumstances. All I remember is
that the grave is a lonely place and the

silence of the tomb was horribly oppressive. A dreamy sensation came over me and a sense of suffocation became apparent.

How long I remained in this condition I do not know. The first sense of returning to life came over me when I heard scraping of a spade on my coffin lid. I felt myself raised and borne away. I was taken out of my coffin, not to my home, but to a physician's office. I beheld the doctors who had waited upon me at my home, dressed in white aprons. In their hands they had knives…Both approached the table and opened my mouth, when by superhuman effort, my eyelids were slightly raised. The next thing I hear was, 'Look out, you fool, he is alive.'

" 'He's dead,' rejoined the other doctor.

"' See, he opened his eyes,' continued the first doctor. The other physician let the knife drop and a short time after that I commenced to recover rapidly. Instead of cutting me up they took me home…I owed my life to the doctors' dispute as to what ailed me during my illness."

**San Francisco Chronicle January 1, 1906**

**GHASTLY FIND IN CEMETERY**

**Bodies of Soldiers Exhumed at Old Fort Hayes Indicate That Men Were Buried Alive**

Hayes City (Kas.), December 31. —From Disclosures made this week in the old burying ground of old Fort Hayes it is evident that many soldiers were buried alive there in a cholera epidemic. The bodies were now being moved to Leavenworth, and the fort is being abandoned as a military reserve.

Coffins were dug up that give evidences of the frightful struggles of

the inmates for life. Some of the bodies had turned over; others had the legs drawn up to the neck; others were grasping the hair. In the epidemic the health laws required thee immediate burial of victims, and this ghastly evidence indicates that a large number of cholera patients were alive when buried.

**Dolly Stolze**

Dolly Stolze is the writer and editor of Strange Remains, a blog site about human remains, bizarre history, and even weirder excavations.

Her articles have been featured on Atlas Obscura, Defrosting Cold Cases, and Forensic Magazine.

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EXHIBITION
RIDGWAY







# ‘Gabriel’s Revelation’ Tablet Translation Now Available on Hartman Website



15.07.2008 , by Israel Knohl share this article:

The full and complete translation by Hartman Institute Senior Fellow Israel Knohl of the "Gabriel's Revelation" tablet that is so much in the news is now available hereon the website of Shalom Hartman Institute.

Knohl's translation and interpretation are being discussed worldwide by Christians, Jews, archeologists, theologians, historians, and the media.

Click here to see an image of the stone in *Time* magazine. Click here to see an article in *The New York Times*, plus another image of the stone with its owner, antiquities collector David Jeselsohn.

**Gabriel's Revelation**
English Translation by Israel Knohl

Col. 1
1. [ ] ……..
2. [ ] Lord
3. [ ] . [ ] .
4. [ f]or th[us sa]id the Lo[rd] I have betr[oth]ed you to me,
garden
5. [ ]… ..[
6. and I will talk …. …. [
7. [ ] children of Israel …. [?]…[ ] ...[ ] ….
8. son of David [?] ……[
9. [ ] the word of the Lor[d]
10. [ ] …. ….. ….. ….. you have asked … [?]
11. [?] Lord you have asked me, so said the God of Hosts
12. [ ] .. from my house Israel and I will talk about the greatness of
Jerusalem
13. [Thus] said the Lord, God of Israel, now all the nations
14. … enc[amp] on Jerusalem and from it are exi[led]
15. one two three forty Prophets and the elders
16. and the Hasidim. My servant David, ask of Ephraim
17. [that he] place the sign; (this) I ask of you. For thus said
18. the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, my gardens are ripe,
19. My holy thing for Israel. By three days you shall know, for thus said
20. the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, the evil has been broken
21. before righteousness. Ask me, and I shall tell you, what is this
22. wicked branch, plastered white. You are standing, the angel
23. is supporting you. Do not fear. Blessed is the glory of the Lord God
from

24. his seat. In a little while, I will shake
25. .. the heavens and the earth. Here is the glory of the Lord God
26. of Hosts, the God of Israel, These are the seven chariots
27. at the gate of Jerusalem and the gates of Judea they will re[st] for
28. my three angels, Michael and all the others, look for
29. your power. So said of the Lord God of Hosts, the God
30. of Israel. One two three four five six
31. [se]ven for my angels….. what is this? He said, the frontlet
32. …. [ ] …. ……. and the second chief
33. watches on.. Jerusalem …… three in the greatness
34. …….. three [ ] …..
35. [ ] …. . that he saw a man … works [
36. that he …. [ ] that a sign from Jerusalem
37. I on ...[ ] ashes and a sign of exile ..
38. [s]ign of exile ……. God sin … and see
39. …. … [ ] Jerusalem said the Lord
40. …… ……. That his mist will fill most of the moon
41. [ ] blood that the northerner would become maggoty
42. [ ]abhorrence the diseased spot . in all
43. [ ] . God [
44. [ ] . [?]

Col. 2 (*There are no legible words before line 51*)

51. with you (or: your nation) ….
52. .. the angels [ ] from ... on [ ] ..
53. … and tomorrow to … they will rest … big .. .. ..
54. [by] three days this is what [I have] said He
55. these are [
56. please see the north[erner] enca[mps] [
57. Seal up the blood of the slaughtered of Jerusalem. For thus said the Lord of Hos[ts]
58. the God of Israel, So said the Lord of Hosts the God of
59. Israel [
60. … He will have pity .. His mercy are ne[ar]
61. [ ] blessed ? …
62. daughter ? …
63. …
64. [ ] …[ ] beloved ?
65. Three holy ones of the world from.... [ ]
66. [ ] **shalom** he said, in you we trust … [?]
67. Announce him of blood, this is their chariot.
68. Many are those who love the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel
69. Thus said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel ….[?]
70. prophets. I sent to my people my three shepherds. I will say (?)
71. that I have seen bless[ing]… …. Go say(?)
72. The place for David the servant of the Lord [ ]...[ ] .. [ ]

73. The heaven and the earth, blessed …… [ ]
74. men. Showing steadfast love to thousands …. steadfast love. [ ]
75. Three shepherds went out for Israel … [ ]…
76. If there is a priest, if there are sons of holy ones ....[ ]
77. Who am I? I am Gabriel …….. [ ]
78. You will rescue them…….. for two [ ] ...[ ]
79. from before of you the three si[g]ns three .. [ ]
80. In three days, live, I Gabriel com[mand] yo[u],
81. prince of the princes, the dung of the rocky crevices [ ]... ..[ ]
82. to the visions (?) … their tongue (?) [ ] … those who love me
83. to me, from the three, the small one that I took, I Gabriel
84. Lord of Hosts Gd of Is[rael] [
85. then you will stand …
86. … /
87. … world ? /

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**Something more to consider**
Retired professor and university dean, Stan Seidner contends in "The Knohl Hypothesis and `Hazon Gabriel,`" that it reflects the Apocalyptic beliefs of the day, many which are found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as antecedent and predictive writings of Christianity. He also suggested the use of infra-red technological applications, similar to what had been utilized on Dead Sea Scroll Material in the recent past. Challenging Knohl`s "Two Messiahs" theory, Seidner noted that, "Knohl's reliance upon what he calls, the `Glorification Hymn,` in support of a first Messiah's relationship with King Herod, failed in its Carbon 14 testing. It predates Herod's ascendency to the throne by at least twelve years and as much as one hundred and fifty six." However, he does agree with Knohl`s interpretation of the inscription,"to rise from the dead within three days."
Yigal, USA, 16/06/2009 22:52:00

**You`re overlooking something**
Have you ever read Hosea 6:2? 2 After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. This verse isn`t about a messiah. This is about Ephraim (The Kingdom of Israel). Hosea spends a lot of time talking about how Israel (Not Judah. Judah is still there.) will be restored. 4 O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. Again, Ephraim, mentioned at the top of the tablet. If this tablet is apoclyptic in nature, then one would expect Israel to be restored. It just makes more sense that way then to insert an idea about a ressurecting messiah. Had it not been for Jesus, no one would be saying any-thing about someone coming back from the dead.
Tim M, USA, 08/06/2009 01:14:00

**Filling in the blank spots...**

It would be interesting to lay the text from the stone out in the Gematria form (numeric) and see if there is a patttern to it. This may help fill in the blanks. Is there a Hassid in the house ?

David, USA, 05/11/2008 19:05:00

**Very Interesting**

Very interesting but I am sure not the only one. As for the gentleman referring to this as old gobildegook I also remember Einstien in later years referencing a possible higher being or creator. So please if you don`t believe that is fine but leave the rest of us alone. Why does it offend you so much for us to believe in something positive that gives us strength and hope?

James Minor, USA, 31/10/2008 00:38:00

**Grateful...**

There is yet more scripture to be discovered! What a blessing. Thank you for posting this Professor Knohl!!

LDSWoman, USA, 18/09/2008 21:09:00

**Gabriel`s Revealation**

It`s all about Faith!

Baruch, U.S., 25/08/2008 15:21:00

**Gabriel`s Revealation**

It sounds alot like Zechariah actually. As to the contention that 3 days and nights then a resurrection is a Christian invention, Yeshua himself said," As Jonah...

Max Rambow, USA, 16/08/2008 15:44:00

**Will the world ever move forward**

Now I realise what Albert Einstien meant when he spoke of superstitious nonsense,I`m sorry but there is nothing enlightning in a load of old gobildegook

Kevin Doyle, Australia, 28/07/2008 09:11:00

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# Proof of ghosts? Phantom bishop 'pictured in one of Britain's most haunted cathedrals'

express.co.uk

**A MUM got the fright of her life when she saw the 'ghost' of a medieval bishop lurking in a picture taken at one of Britain's 'most haunted cathedrals'.**

By Jon Austin
PUBLISHED: 06:14, Mon, Aug 17, 2015 | UPDATED: 06:16, Mon, Aug 17, 2015



KERRYLAUNDERS•SWNS

Kerry Launders, 29, took the spooky shot after visiting Norwich Cathedral with partner Simon Tobb, 30, and her children Millie, two, and Oscar, one.

When she looked at pictures taken on her mobile phone back home she saw the creepy figure captured on an upper level of the allegedly haunted 11th-century building.

The "apparition" appears to wear long robes and a tall hat like a bishop.

Ms Launders, from Bury in Greater Manchester, believes it could be one of 12 or so bishops buried in the cathedral.

She said: "It was my first time in a cathedral and it was really nice.



KERRYLAUNDERS•SWNS

"There was nothing up there.

"But when I look back through my photos I saw something and had a proper look and I thought 'wow' this is a good picture.

"It looks like a bishop - and there are a lot of those buried there - with the long clothing and the tall hat.

"I wasn't scared when I saw it though because I believe in this sort of stuff."

The Grade-I listed cathedral is reputedly haunted and a number of ghost tours have it as a

focal stop-off point.

People, including workers on surrounding building sites, have reportedly seen objects moving on their own or heard strange noises.

Visitors have also claimed to have seen other ghostly figures inside the cathedral.

There have been a glut of realistic looking ghosts caught on camera in recent months - but many have been put down to "ghost apps" available on mobile phones.

These allow users to import a ghostly figure into their own picture then blur and edit them to blend them in, giving genuine paranormal researchers a real headache.

But Ms Launders insisted this was a genuine snap.

She added: "I was just taking photos of the arch on my camera and that was that."

Some who have seen the image believe it is just an optical illusion caused by light hitting another part of the building's stonework.

7 Comments

AlcibiadesNEW53 days ago
Obviously not a ghost but rather the light on the wall to the left of a pillar. The best thing to do is to return with a proper camera on a tripod and take some better photographs but of course no newspaper would ever consider that.


MichaelSandsNEW56 days ago
If it is haunted then it is not very Christian then is it?

NormanMilesNEW76 days ago
NO it was not a ghost.....but Norm:....Me for short.

Phil OsophicalNEW77 days ago
Sub-heading says: "A MUM got the fright of her life when she saw the 'ghost' "
Within the story the lady is quoted as saying: "I wasn't scared when I saw it though because I believe in this sort of stuff."

Oh dear! Sensationalism trumps facts any day.

indioutreachNEW77 days ago
The decline in churchgoers in UK apparently have caused prelates to design measures such as getting people to pose as ghosts. This was done successfully in Norway in the 1970s when the figure of a famed ghost from centuries before was seen moving about in the dingy upper parts of the ancient Trondheim cathedral and was heard singing in Latin. It caused a sensation nationally for weeks, until it was finally admitted by a student who carried out the spoof.
Ghosts are great PR for their masters!

Henry_VNEW77 days ago
Looks like a supporting pillar to me.

Poppy CockNEW77 days ago



What's needed is another shot of the same part of the cathedral taken at the same angle to compare with this one to try to see what the blurry image might really be.....but is anyone bothered enough to make the effort?

Saturday, 31st October 2015

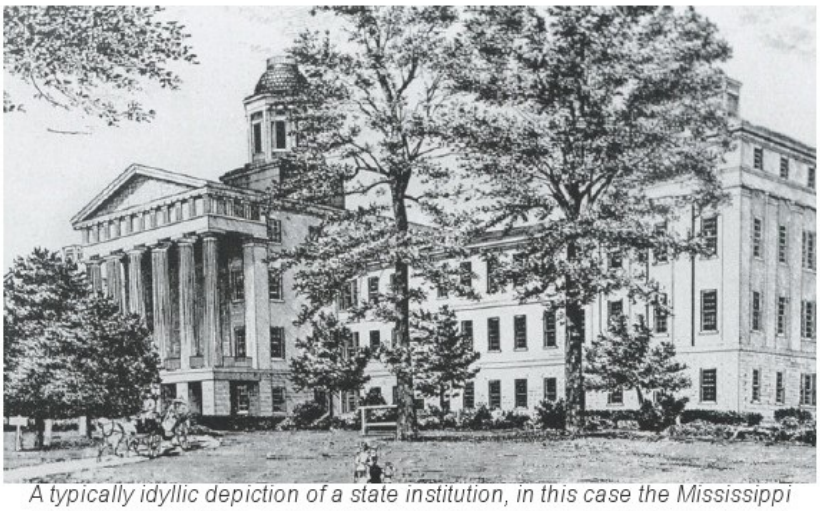
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# Ghosts are Scary, Disabled People are Not: The Troubling Rise of the Haunted Asylum





*A typically idyllic depiction of a state institution, in this case the Mississippi State Lunatic Asylum, from around the turn of the 20th century. Life inside these institutions didn't often parallel their external appearances. (A Brief History Of The Asylum Cemetery)*

BySarah Handley-Cousins ♦
October 29, 2015

This past spring, the defunct Willard Psychiatric Center (previously known as the Willard Asylum for the Chronic Insane) in Ovid, New York, opened its doors for tours — one day only, with no advance sale tickets. I immediately made plans to make the two-hour drive — after all, for the past few years, I've been working on a project that touches on institutionalized Union veterans, and many of my subjects lived, and died, at Willard. The opportunity to see the asylum was rare: the grounds still house a correctional facility, so security on the campus is tight, and most of the buildings sit locked and empty. I was eager for the opportunity see where so many of my old soldiers lived out their lives, and to visit their graves.

I left bright and early from Buffalo and arrived in Ovid with plenty of time before the tour. But instead of getting my ticket, I found myself at a dead stop, just before the asylum grounds, in a line of hundreds of cars. There is nothing else in Ovid (no offense, Ovidians), so it was pretty clear that the traffic was for the tour. Within a few minutes, state troopers arrived to direct traffic, and it became clear that no one was getting in to see the asylum — there were just too many people. I waited in line for half an hour before a trooper turned me around and sent me, grumpy and disappointed, back to Buffalo.

I spent the rest of my drive pondering what on earth had caused hundreds and hundreds of people to show up on a Saturday morning to go on a tour of an old mental institution. I discovered later that nearly 4000 people tried to get tours, up from less than 500 the year before. Visitors had swarmed the grounds, causing property damage and sneaking into areas of the campus that were closed to tours. Were there really thousands of folks so excited about New York State history or local landmarks that they would flood a tiny village to take a building tour?

When I got home, some research revealed what attracted so many to the tour: the paranormal. The Travel Channel's *Destination Fear* had run a short segment on the asylum, featuring two employees of the correctional facility campus describing vaguely creepy events, such as the suspicion that the ghost of a red-haired nurse-turned-patient wandered the halls. When the tour of the asylum was announced, news had apparently traveled through local

ghost-hunting circles. Most of the folks who had lined up by the thousands to tour the old asylum weren't interested at all in the history of asylums — they were hoping to see a ghost.

Asylums and institutions have long been a source of fear and curiosity. Asylums, along with other institutions such as soldiers' homes and prisons, were common tourist attractions in the 19th century, mostly for their beautiful grounds and architecture but also for able-bodied visitors to catch a glimpse of the patients. More recently, asylums entered into pop culture as a setting for scary movies and television shows, including the successful *American Horror Story: Asylum*. A new development includes using the asylum as a form of haunted house attraction during the Halloween season. Buffalo's own Fright World features an "Eerie State Asylum" attraction this year, which challenges guests to "escape from the lunatics" and survive the attack of "demented doctors and patients."



*Advertisement for the "Pennhurst Asylum" haunted house.*

A particularly controversial haunted house, Pennhurst Asylum, opened in 2010, when Philadelphia's Pennhurst Hospital — formerly the Eastern Pennsylvania State Institution for the Feeble-Minded and Epileptic — was purchased by real estate developer Richard Chakejian. Pennhurst had a checkered past. In its early years, the institution was a part of the effort to segregate developmentally disabled people and prevent them from reproducing, particularly "feeble-minded" women and girls, who they believed were "more of a menace to society than a feeble-minded boy" because they were capable of having numerous "defective" children. In 1968, a local NBC station ran an exposé series entitled "Suffer the Little Children," which sought to make public the maltreatment at the hospital. Bill Baldini, creator of the series, discovered that the institutionalized children were being neglected and received little to no treatment or support, but were rather housed and restrained — worse, Baldini argued, than animals in a zoo. (As of 2012, the operators of the Pennhurst Asylum Haunted House were playing Baldini's exposé for visitors while they waited in line for tours, along with a fictional movie that told an alternate history of the institution.1)

In 1974, a landmark law suit was filed against the institution's administration, in which U.S. District Court Judge Raymond J. Broderick ruled that Pennhurst was overcrowded and poorly staffed, that patients were neglected and illegally controlled with mechanical and chemical restraints, and that institution staff violated patients' Fifth, Eighth, and Fourteenth amendment rights. The hospital administration continually appealed the decision until its closure in 1987. Now, this institution, known for its inexcusable treatment of developmentally disabled children, operates as Pennhurst Asylum, a haunted house open Thursdays through Sundays

in the fall, scaring visitors with the specter of the institutionalized and mental ill.

There's no doubt that life in Pennhurst, as in other institutions and asylums, could be horrific. Take for instance a story from Dennis Haggerty, an member of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC), the advocacy group which eventually brought the first right-to-education law suit in the nation. Haggerty recalled the story of John Stark Williams, a boy institutionalized at Pennhurst. John's mother wasn't able to visit her son because she couldn't afford the trip to Philadelphia. When she finally arrived at the hospital with help from PARC, she waited for hours to see her son before being informed that John was dead. According to the hospital administration, John had died after slipping in the shower, and when no one claimed his body, his body was given to a medical researchers. No one had claimed the body because no one from Pennhurst informed his mother that John was dead.2



*Inmate-workers in an unnamed institution. Many institutions sought self-sufficiency by putting institutionalized people to work cooking, cleaning, and even farming. (Disability History Exhibit, Alaska Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education)*

It wasn't just Pennhurst. The mentally ill and developmentally disabled were also subjected to medical experimentation. In *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,* Rebecca Skloot recounted the story of Henrietta's daughter, Elsie Lacks, who was institutionalized from a very young age for epilepsy in the 1950s.3 The institution where Elsie lived, Crownsville Hospital (originally the Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland), was chronically overcrowded and underfunded, and was notorious for its appalling conditions. Elsie was likely used — without her consent — in a study conducted there on epileptics testing the effectiveness of pneumoencephalography, a painful procedure that attempted to replace cerebrospinal fluid with air in order to produce better x-ray images of the brain. Elsie died in Crownsville in 1955. Mentally ill and developmentally disabled patients in many institutions were also maltreated through the use of mechanical and chemical restraints, ranging from the infamous "Utica crib" in the 19th century to electric shock therapy and heavy psychotropic drugs in the 20th century. In a more passive sense, patients were mistreated through sheer neglect and stigmatization, as the focus of asylums shifted from therapeutics to warehousing in an attempt to keep the "feeble-minded" and insane out of the public eye. For those who have been institutionalized, there is a very real haunting – not by ghosts, but by trauma.

I like a ghost story as much as anyone, but the patients who lived in institutions like Willard and Pennhurst weren't spooky spirits — they were human beings with complex lives. I don't find the stories of John or Elsie or the patients of Willard exciting or thrilling — I find them repulsive. As Emily Smith Beitiks has deftly noted, "while the field of disability studies still struggles to gain access to resources in universities and disability activists still have Americas with Disabilities Act compliance denied on the grounds of expense, this commercial playground of fetishized disability thrives."4 Haunted attractions that use asylums as settings

rely on reductive and offensive portrayals of the mentally ill as horrifying, dangerous, and evil people that must be kept within an asylum for the protection of the public. They exploit the ways that the real patients of mental institutions were treated for cheap thrills — "patients" are often depicted in restraints or undergoing medical procedures and experiments. Indeed, part of the "creep" factor is the general disrepair of the institution, invoking the very real neglect patients experienced. The thousands of "paranormal investigators" who hoped for a tour of the Willard Asylum were looking for the real-life version of what Pennhurst Asylum has created: an eerie setting filled with the ghosts of scary, dangerous lunatics. In the process, they disrespected the grounds of Willard and likely influenced New York State to think twice about opening the grounds for tours in future years, making it even harder for historians to gain access to the asylum.

This Halloween, do me a favor: think twice before you buy a ticket and stand in line to visit a "haunted asylum" attraction. Consider picking up a book about the history of those women and men deemed mentally ill instead.

**Further Reading**


Grob, Gerald. *The Mad Among Us: The History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

Miron, Janet. *Prisons, Asylums, and the Public: Institutional Visiting in the Nineteenth Century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Noll, Steven and James W. Trent, Jr., *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2004.

Sisti, Dominic and Andrea Segal. "Halloween Attraction Dishonors Mentally Ill Who Lived at Hospital."

Whitaker, Robert. *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.

The Willard Suitcase Exhibit.


**Notes**

1. Emily Smith Beitiks, "The Ghosts of Institutionalization at Pennhurst's Haunted Asylum," *The Hastings Center Report* 42 (January-February 2012), 23. Return to text.
2. Dennis Haggerty, "God damn it, there isn't any time. The time should be right now," in Fred Pelka, ed., *What We Have Done: An Oral History of the Disability Rights Movement* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 134-136. Return to text.
3. Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2010), 268-279. Return to text.
4. Beitiks, "The Ghosts of Institutionalization at Pennhurst's Haunted Asylum," 23. Return to text.

Sarah Handley-Cousins is a PhD candidate in history at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Her scholarly interests include medicine, gender, disability, and war studies.

**20 Comments**

esbeitiks October 29th, 2015

Thanks for this piece and for citing my Pennhurst work! Here's a blog I wrote on the more general theme of Halloween as well: https://longmoreinstitute.wordpress.com/2015/10/12/dos-and-donts-for-a-freaky-but-disability-positive-halloween/



Sarah Handley-Cousins October 30th, 2015

Thanks so much for sharing, Emily!

Karen Baskin October 29th, 2015

Very good and informative article. The conditions for the mentally ill and diabled have been improving although not as fast as one would hpe due to funding issues and as usual much misinformation about them.

Tris Chandler October 29th, 2015

The real scary people of asylums were the ones in charge, the ones people still think of as 'normal'.

Jennifer R October 29th, 2015

The ones who should be afraid are those who allowed this to happen, if they are still alive.

Duanne Ribeiro October 29th, 2015

Good article! I want to notice that "American Horror Story: Asylum" (although the series as a whole can be blamed for the things you said) shows how reason or the discourses of reason can be destructive, alienating people, suffocating them and their pain. Words, theories and institutions are the horror in this season. I've wrote about that in a probably better way, but in Portuguese, and I ask you to forgive if I can't express myself as well in English.

Liv October 29th, 2015

Funny, I thought the opposite. I think American Horror Story:Asylum opened my eyes to the terrible tortures these patients endured at the hands of those in charge and makes me sad and empathetic for what they suffered through. They also portrayed issues like how back then lesbianism and such was considered abnormal and people would throw them in the asylum for such. I think they actually covered a lot of issues to highlight

these aspects.

Haley Honeman October 29th, 2015

Interesting idea Duanne. I've been thinking lately about how discourses of reason can be oppressive. Thanks for sharing.

Amanda Anonda October 29th, 2015

This means so much to me as a disabled and mentally ill adult. Thank you so much.



Sarah Handley-Cousins October 30th, 2015

Thank you for reading!

jean spotts October 29th, 2015

I toured Penn Hurst in 1967, as a chid-care trainee thru Devereux for a 1 yr program for care of emotion and disturbed children. I was just turned 18 and the youngest in the class of 10.Truly an eye opener for me. I remember the smell- the cribbed and a small class room where we met an argoyle male child. I am now almost 67 and I can still feel that day. JSpotts



Sarah Handley-Cousins October 30th, 2015

Powerful. Thank you for sharing.

David Harley October 29th, 2015

Who are you to say we aren't scary? A few good curses can obtain a week's food. Let's hear it for us limping crazies! No more sanitizing. Free drugs would be useful.

Maria Adela October 30th, 2015

VERY long …So sorry. I'm a girl with ASD, prior history of anorexia and remission of bipolar but now treated for ADHD and panic/ptsd/anxiety etc:

I disagree with a lot of this. The problem? You say that things are fetishised. That implies some extreme focus and inappropriate DELIGHT (I know you don't mean it in it's true form AKA sexual delight) from a tiny detail of some grander more complex thing. But….the asylums didn't have one r two patients, they had many over crowding common, procedures applied to almost all not few.
As for halloween haunted houses or asylums or hayrides….sorry, but they are hammy and meant to be exaggerations. There for the cheap thrill as you say but not at the expense of the patient's memory. Instead the way the patients may be depicted is a reflection on how SOCIETY has seen patients and just how wrong it was.The whole lunatic killer….that's more an issue I can see but nowadays people may surely see that but ask them if they believe a crazy person would do it and they would likely think of crazy as in psychopathic given the

high spike in serial killers and the phenomenon o f such. It's easier to think disease or an imbalance could do that than the terror of someone really not "ill" but just not born with the "normal" thing called empathy (which is odd that so many of advocates I meet argue about diversity etc. and yet have a staunch dislike of psychopaths and sociopaths not wanting to be associated with them. Not saying I want to either but yeah…)
Asylums make up the history of humanity. Many may go and not have a mental health issue but then again? SO many were thrown into asylums and DIDN'T have any…others may have had ancestors, family members even in such places.…

The point of these scary places never has come across as making fun of the patients. It's a thing that is so feared BECAUSE of what it all implies…the fears reaching back across centuries. How one can lose themselves when reality loses its coherence…when treatment is the thing that drives you crazy…when the manipulation makes you question so much…etc. Asylums physical aspect actually is a very sary thing because we tend to link it to the very rot at the heart of those who used to practice horrors there.

If anything, the asylum trope has made people delve deeper and many like me with multiple health issues in the past and many a stay mental health facilities. I personally owe my life to one for feeding me via NG tube as I would have had my ED kill me. And Yes, the psychiatric institution has some dark history. But only in this past centuries has medicine gotten less abusive itself (tuberculosis hospital? The way corpses were obtained from graves for medical students to learn and that is the only way they got to learn things that led to th e surgery of today.…)
EVERYTHING in the world has had patches of shame. It'd be never ending if we boycotted everything that has done this or that. I suggest adding some demographic stats on views on mental health from early this century to now, how have asylums and their tours, film presentations, horror attractions influenced views? Because I believe they've actually gotten many people to care more for those who have suffered. And it's easy to think that so much time has gone by since psychiatry started being taken as a serious institution. It's in it's ealry stages. Physics has been here longer and we still are baffled by so many things. The human psyche is just as complex as the paradox of Relativity and quantum mechanics apparently BOTH applying and yet contradicting. Humans are in charge and GOD we are flawed. Overall? It's in a better place than it was 10 years ago It's in a better place than 20 or 50 years ago by leaps and bounds.

I feel there were good intentions behind this but I feel it made a weak argument. It's more raging against a system that we KNOW was flawed, we all do. The world knows. We know it has miles to go. But boycotting this? Saying that is dishonoring the ones who were hurt or killed? I think it's grasping at straws or at worst trying o find yet another thing to beat up psychiatry for failures. Sins of the father? Enough really. The Holocaust was horrible but we do not keep beating up the German population saying they did this or that horrible thing. THEY KNOW!

I honestly believe NOT having these options, just having a book option? THAT would dihonour them. Why? Not everyne likes or can read actually. Many books are for much older people and the kids who start learning about the stuff that took place via these places and

then films….they get an early intro and can over years develop their views instead of keeping it away, hidden or some not-to-be-touched site It'd make people question WHAT they had to hide then. Were they actually that bad? Maybe they weren't. Or they'd think the lunatic killer is more than just the cheap trope they've seen and instead a very real thing and stigmas worsen. Ever think of that?



Sarah Handley-Cousins October 30th, 2015

Maria, thanks so much for sharing your thoughts. I think you have a point to say that perhaps some of these phenomena (like haunted houses and television shows) have gotten people interested in the true history of asylums and the treatment of institutionalized people – I think some of the points made above, for instance, about the possible merits of American Horror Story: Asylum, speak to that. But I don't think the way to go about reaching the public with this history is through "haunted asylums," though I agree that we need more than just books. What I'd ideally like to see is more old asylums to become museums, that can use the actual physical asylums buildings to document the history of psychiatry, institutionalization, and mental illness in the US. An interesting example of how this could work is Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, which has an incredible museum that deals both with the history and present state of incarceration in the United States – and also hosts a haunted house. The haunted house at Eastern State incorporates the history of the building, includes interpretive exhibits, and encourages visitors to visit the prison during the day to tour the remaining exhibits.

travis cleveland October 30th, 2015

I agree with Sarah Cousins, and cringe when I hear of thrill seekers, prowling the grounds, entering buildings. I spent 36 years working in psychiatric hospitals, so saw thousands of patients, most of whom were there to get well or, at least, better, diagnoses galore. The employees were on the scene to help and usually did so. Typically, facilities such as Willard had good eras as well as hard times, i.e., 1938-1946, a war on, little money, and over crowding. Yes, for edification, they could read books speaking to treatments and environment, and if hard times appeal, I suggest "Shame of the States," by Albert Deutsch, published circa 1948.

Tom S. October 30th, 2015

Ok 1. Pennhurst isn't even owned by Richard anymore 2. The Haunt at pennhurst brings in a lot of money to put back into the buildings to save them. It's incredibly expensive to abate the buildings to get rid of mold, asbestos, etc, among many other things 3. You forgot to mention pennhurst has a small historical museum set up now, allows photography tours, and is currently working on historical tours

You're lucky someone is actually saving the place instead of being knocked down. People need to quit complaining about everything and actually know the facts first.

Sarah Handley-Cousins October 30th, 2015



Thanks for your thoughts, Tom. Not having visited Pennhurst, the only evidence I was able to find of a museum was in the “history” section of the haunted attraction’s website, which seemed to indicate that it was not yet open. I am aware that the Pennhurst Memorial & Preservation Alliance is in the process of creating a museum and interpretive center on the Pennhurst grounds – is that what you’re referring to? I’m glad that it will offer historical tours. But I will not stop “complaining,” and nor will many others, while these haunted attractions continue to perpetuate the stigmatization of mental illness and disability.

Jennifer October 30th, 2015

This information is very very helpful. I am a struggling college student and I’m trying to find out as much as I can on the mental health and the state hospitals especially Northampton and it’s history. The government is trying to get rid of what’s left of it. My question is why? Make it into a shrine or museum of how it use to operate back when it was fully functional im not saying have it in all its glory that would cost a lot and so much of it is gone now. They have museums for certain important people like Indians why can’t they make a museum of one of the last buildings standing in Northampton that is left from the Northampton state hospital, and the history behind it. I for one would pay to see it and would visit Northampton more just for this historical attraction.

Christina October 30th, 2015

Hello Jennifer,

You can find a lot of information in the Northampton Images of America book. I own it, and I can tell you it’s very good!

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**The Haunting Story of Marion Lambert**

The First World War was raging in Europe in the middle days of February 1916 but among Chicagoans and others across the country, one of the most riveting newspaper stories of the day was the mysterious case of Marion Lambert. The attractive daughter of the gardener at a North Shore estate was found dead in the woods near the Lake Forest interurban railroad station on the early morning of February 10. She had celebrated her eighteenth birthday just four days before and she had last been seen on February 9, when she had left for classes at Deerfield High School in Highland Park. She never arrived there, and was not seen again until her body was discovered the following day. She had been killed by a deadly dose of poison, although what exactly happened to her remains a lingering mystery to this day.

And because of this mystery, there are many who do not believe that Marion Lambert rests in peace. Like other restless young women in the Chicago area, her ghost is said to be seen along the area roadways, not far from where she died.



**Marion Lambert**

Marion Lambert was a beautiful young girl, as photographs that remain of her clearly show. She was a pretty and vivacious senior at Deerfield High School. Her light brown, wavy hair was cut stylishly short and her minister called her the liveliest girl at the Lake Forest Presbyterian Church. She lived a happy life, usually with a smile on her face. She was the beloved only child of Frank Lambert, the head gardener employed by clothing millionaire Jonas Kuppenheimer, on whose estate the family lived. The Lambert family did well for themselves and times were good in Lake Forest. Many of the local tycoons were becoming wealthier by equipping the warring armies in Europe and they paid their employees well. Marion was starting to dream of going off to college in the fall.

But perhaps the one thing that made her happiest was the young man in her life, Will Orpet, a college student three years older than she was. Orpet's father was also a caretaker; he worked on the estate of farm equipment tycoon Cyrus McCormick. The two families had known each other for years and were friendly with one another but the friendship between Will and Marion blossomed when he began sending her letters from Madison, where he was

studying journalism at the University of Wisconsin. The letters were only flirtatious at first, but soon grew more serious. “I want to see you dearest, and want you badly,” he wrote to Marion on April 8, 1915. “If only I could get my arm around you now, and get up close to you and kiss the life out of you, I would be happy.”

It was later recalled that Will was not content with mere words. When he came to see her, he sat scandalously close to her on the sofa, insisting on holding her hand and daring to kiss her. Marion did not approve at first but Will refused to give up and slowly, she started to give in to his advances. In September of that year, he came to her home in Lake Forest, took her for a drive and stopped at the edge of the woods just south of the Sacred Heart Convent. They went for a walk in the forest and then sat down together in a remote spot, carefully hidden among the trees. Marion gave herself to him there and they made love in the quiet of the forest.

Marion began dreaming of a wedding but Orpet, apparently bored after getting what he wanted out of the pretty young woman, began to lose interest. His letters became short and often he told her that he didn’t have time to write. In November, when Marion confessed that she feared she might be pregnant, the letters grew even colder. Orpet was angry and stopped just short of calling her a liar. They had only been intimate once, he insisted, and he didn’t believe that it could have happened. In spite of his denials, he called on a pharmacist friend and sent Marion a potion that was meant to relieve her “delicate condition.” Orpet was determined not to let his dalliance with Marion became a trap. She wasn’t his only girlfriend – a college pal said that he had several others on the side -- and he wasn’t serious about her. He was planning to marry another girl, a young chemistry teacher from DeKalb, and he wasn’t going to let Marion trap him into a marriage that he didn’t want.

By the time the holidays arrived, Marion undoubtedly knew that she wasn’t pregnant but it’s unknown whether or not she told Orpet about this. She wanted to hang onto him as long as she could, believing the two of them were meant to be together. On February 6, 1916, Marion celebrated her eighteenth birthday at a spirited party thrown by her best friend, Josephine Davis.

Two days later, while Josephine was visiting at her home, the telephone rang and Marion left her friend in the sitting room when she into the hallway went to answer it. The telephone call was from Will Orpet. Josephine later stated that Marion was uneasy when she returned to the sitting room, but later, at Orpet’s trial, she said that Marion was “confused” and became “greatly distressed and depressed.” She even testified that Marion confided in her that, “if Will throws me over and marries that other girl, I’ll kill myself.”

But was Josephine’s testimony the truth? Marion’s parents and several other of her friends claimed that the girl had been happy and untroubled in the days leading up to her death. This bit of testimony remains one of the lingering mysteries in the case.

On the morning of February 9, Marion, bundled up in a green coat, walked with Josephine to the Sacred Heart station, where they usually caught the train to Deerfield High School. But

having arrived on the platform, Marion decided not to take the train. She told her friend that she had to go to the post office to mail a letter to her Sunday school teacher. That was the last time that Josephine saw her alive.

Later that night, Frank Lambert waited for his daughter at the Sacred Heart station. Marion had told her parents that she was going to attend a party after school and would return on the 8:05 p.m. electric car from Highland Park. When the train arrived, though, Marion was not on board. She was not on the next train either. Lambert waited for over an hour before he drove into Highland Park. He was told that Marion was not at the party and in fact, her friends told him, she had not come to school at all that day.

Confused and worried, Lambert returned home and he and his wife spent a sleepless night waiting for and worrying about their daughter. Finally, before dawn, he couldn't wait any longer and he returned to the Sacred Heart station to search for any clues as to Marion's whereabouts. He stumbled about in the darkness, looking for footprints in the snow by the light of burning matches. It was too dark to see anything so he left to go get a friend. When they sun came up, they returned and found a line of footprints leading away from the station in the snow. One of the sets of prints was small, like a girl's, the other was larger. They formed a side-by-side trail that wandered out into the forest.

The two men followed the trail into a small clearing and there, beneath three winter bare oak trees, Lambert saw a bright patch of green in the snow. He let out a small cry and began to run toward it. He soon saw Marion lying there on her side, her school books tucked under her arm and the letter to her Sunday school teacher still in her pocket. Her right hand was ungloved and it stretched away from her body. In the palm of her ice-cold hand her father saw a smear of white, powdery crystals. Her lips were bloody and blistered as if they had been burned.



**The clearing in the snow where Marion's body was discovered.**

Marion's autopsy was performed at midnight, as soon as her body had thawed from the bitter cold. A few hours later, Ralph Dady, the state's attorney of Lake County, held a press conference for the horde of newspaper reporters that had gathered, seeking information about the tragedy. "We are confident Miss Lambert was poisoned," Dady told the reporters.

We do not know if the poison was taken with suicidal intent or whether it was administered by someone else. We believe a man was with her when she died. We are bending our efforts toward locating that person, and when we do, we believe the motive of her act will be explained."

Although a search of the area by police detectives found no trace of a bottle, the coroner concluded that Marion had swallowed cyanide mixed into an acidic solution. That had caused the blistering on her mouth and had left behind the white residue on her hand.



**Marion's father, Frank Lambert, waiting at the police station after his daughter's body was discovered.**

Suspicion quickly fell on Will Orpet. A reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* was the first to track him down at his rooming house in Madison, Wisconsin. Orpet said that he was shocked by the news of Marion's death. He told the reporter that he and Marion had corresponded, but that they had not been involved in a "serious affair." In fact, he said he had just sent her a friendly letter wishing her good luck with some upcoming exams and expressing regret that he would not be able to come and visit her soon.

Orpet had indeed mailed the letter – but the rest of the story was a lie.

It was discovered that the affair had been serious and that Marion had thought she was pregnant after their rendezvous in the woods. He sent her drugs meant to cause a miscarriage, even though he claimed that he could not be responsible for her condition. The police searched the post office and found the innocent letter that Orpet had posted but at Marion's house, they found a different one. "Dear Marion," it read, "Jo has told me that you've been pretty sick. Just got word yesterday morning, hence the delay. I hope that everything is all right now and that you will soon be up and around. I'll try to get down to see you, probably the 9th of February, and will call you on the evening of the 8th. Remember the dates… If everything is not all right by the time I see you, it will be, leave it to me."

After this discovery, Orpet was arrested and subjected to serious questioning – first by a reporter who had arranged to have himself locked up so that he could share Will's cell, and then by a collection of police officers, prosecutors and private detectives. They interrogated

him for a full night in Madison, and then brought him to Lake Forest, where he was forced to walk for hours in the woods where Marion's body had been found. They even forced him to stand by the side of the road and watch as her funeral procession made its way to the cemetery.

Orpet's story changed several times but it came down to him admitting that he had kept company with Marion and may have loved her once, but his feelings had changed. He said he had been intimate with her only one time and while she told him that she thought she was pregnant, he didn't believe it. As it turned out, Marion's autopsy showed that she was not pregnant.

In early February, Marion had harassed him into coming to Lake Forest to see her, hinting that if he refused, she might kill herself. He eventually agreed but came in secret because, he said, he did not want his parents to know he was in town. He called her from the train station that evening, but Josephine Davis was at the house and Marion told him that he couldn't come over then. They agreed to meet the next morning in the woods near the Sacred Heart Convent. They walked in the woods for two hours before stopping near three oak trees. Marion pleaded with him to stay true to her, but Orpet refused. He planned to marry another woman, he told her, a chemistry teacher with whom he had fallen in love.

Marion was crying when Will walked away. "Is there no hope?" she called after him.

Orpet didn't answer. He simply kept walking. After a few more steps, he heard the sound of a small cry. When he turned around, he saw that she had fallen into the snow and her body was violently shaking. In only a few moments, he could see that she was dead. Terrified of a scandal, he said he ran away and took the first train back to Madison.

Investigators doubted his story. Why had Orpet written that friendly letter to Marion that said he was unable to come to Lake Forest if he wasn't trying to establish an alibi? And why had he purchased an empty medicine bottle from a pharmacy clerk just before he left Madison? But the real evidence of his guilt came when the police searched the greenhouse at the McCormick estate, where Orpet's father worked as a caretaker. As they sifted through an ash heap in the basement, they found three large clumps of cyanide crystals. They were enough, State's Attorney Ralph Dady said, "to kill a whole high school of girls."

Will Orpet was arrested and locked up at the Waukegan, Illinois, jail. Three weeks later, a grand jury indicted him for Marion's murder and Ralph Dady vowed to send the killer to the gallows.

From jail, Orpet continued to proclaim his innocence, although it was hard for him to explain the letter he sent to Marion and the fact that he had rumpled his bed in Madison on the night before her death to make it appear that he slept there. He had actually, unbeknownst to his family, spent the night in the garage next to their Lake Forest home. He had not done this to create an alibi, he claimed, and he swore that he did not take the medicine bottle that he purchased to the meeting with Marion. The authorities could not link him to the purchase of

any poison but they insisted that he could have easily obtained it from the cyanide in the greenhouse where his father worked. However, some of the newspapers pointed out that the poison could also have been found at the Lambert house and also in the laboratory of Deerfield High School.



**Will Orpet on his way to the courthouse for trial**

The case finally went to trial at the Waukegan courthouse on May 15 with Judge Charles Donnelly presiding. The formidable prosecution included Ralph Dady, state's attorney of McHenry County, David R. Joselyn, who had been called in as a special prosecutor, and Eugene M. Runyard. They were opposed by a defense team that consisted of James H. Wilkerson, Ralph F. Potter and Leslie Hanna, who had been retained on Orpet's behalf by Cyrus McCormick.

That the people of Lake County heartily believed in Orpet's guilt was indicated by the fact that it took 23 days and more than 1,200 interviews to find a dozen men who said they could sit on the jury and review the evidence impartially.

In his opening statement, Ralph Dady stated that he would summon witnesses to prove that Orpet had murdered Marion Lambert because she was a threat to his future. He stressed that he would combat the suicide defense with testimony showing that the girl had left home on Wednesday morning in excellent spirits and happy with her life, not depressed or thinking of killing herself.

Then came setback after setback for the prosecution.

Dady's star witness, Josephine Davis, changed her story, telling the jury that Marion had threatened to kill herself if Orpet left her for another woman. Special prosecutor Joselyn had called her confidently to the stand and was stunned by the turn of events, asking the judge to be able to refer to Josephine's prior statements when interviewed by police. The young woman explained her change of heart by saying that he had originally been hostile and vindictive toward Orpet, blaming him for breaking her best friend's heart, but now she saw things in a different light. Marion had been depressed after speaking to Orpet on the telephone on the night before her death, she said, and claimed she would commit suicide if

Orpet left her.



**Will Orpet's trial at the Lake County Courthouse**

Although Joselyn managed to get Marion's parents and some of her other friends to refute this testimony, the damage had already been done. And there was more to come… A classmate testified that just before Marion's death, he had found her alone in the high school chemistry lab where cyanide was stored.

The prosecution bounced back with testimony from Dr. Ralph Webster, a toxicologist with Rush Medical College, who said that Marion must have taken the fatal dose in liquid form because the cyanide residue had been found in the palm of her hand. This went along with the theory that Orpet had mixed up a deadly concoction with poison from his father's greenhouse.

When Will Orpet took the stand, Dady was convinced that he could break the young man's story. He and his co-counsel were merciless, cross-examining him for nineteen hours over a four-day period. Orpet spoke in a subdued, monotone voice and admitted to terrible things. He had romanced, seduced and tossed away a fragile young woman and he was a liar, denying everything until the facts were thrown in his face. He was also a coward, he confessed, and had abandoned his one-time lover's body in the woods rather than seek help for her because he was worried about a possible scandal. But, he remained adamant, he was not a murderer. Marion had taken her own life when he told her that their relationship was over; he denied he had given her poison.

But for all of the drama that surrounded Orpet's testimony, the case really turned on the facts offered by three chemists that had been hired by the defense. Marion had been killed by potassium cyanide, the kind, it turned out, that could be found in her high school chemistry lab. But the poison that had the police had recovered from the greenhouse where Orpet's father worked was sodium cyanide. Sodium cyanide, it was brought out, had replaced potassium cyanide on the open market several years before but this had not been known to the general public – nor the state's expert, Dr. Webster. Recalled to the stand, Webster had to admit that he had not tested the Orpet poison for anything but its cyanide content. He had

taken for granted that it was potassium cyanide, the type that had killed Marion.

This small fact clinched the case for the defense. The jury took three ballots, the third of which was unanimous, and on July 15, Orpet was declared not guilty. “I’m going to the country,” he told reporters, “I’ve had a bad time but my nerve is still with me. I’m just going to start in where I left off and make good.”

Will Orpet almost immediately vanished into obscurity. Within three months, he had left Lake Forest. Records show that he enlisted in the military and served as a sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War I. Some stories claim that he later became an oil wildcatter and a cowboy in Wyoming. In 1920, under the assumed name of W.H. Dawson, he was briefly in trouble in San Francisco after he abandoned a nineteen-year-old bride whom he had lured from Detroit. After that, Orpet stayed out of the newspapers until he died in 1948. He was buried in a military cemetery in Los Angeles.

In spite of what the jury decided, the story of what really happened in the woods that day remained a popular subject for speculation. Many feel the case has never really been solved. Several pulp detective magazines recapped the story as an unsolved mystery. The death of Marion Lambert left an unsettling mark on the annals of true crime in America – but it also left a mark on supernatural history as well.

Over the years, a strange story had circulated about a stretch of Sheridan Road in Lake Forest, near the site of what used to be Barat College. It was close to this spot in 1916 that Marion’s frozen body was discovered by her heartbroken father. The story of the roadway involves a young woman who appears in the headlights of passing cars – and leaves a terrifying impression on the drivers who are unlucky enough to encounter her.

For instance, a woman was traveling along Sheridan Road one stormy night when she saw a rain-soaked, barefoot girl in a blue dress on the side of the road. As the driver approached, she started to telephone for help, believing the girl might have been in an accident, but before she could dial, she saw something truly out of the ordinary. The lights from her car seemed to pass right through the girl, as if she was not even real. When the car pulled up next to her and the driver slowed down to peer out of her water-streaked window, the girl smiled, displaying ruined teeth inside a blackened and burned mouth – almost as if she had swallowed a burning acidic poison.

The ghost stories have continued for years, often recounting such frightening details as the spectral girl’s short brown hair or the terrifying burns around her mouth and lips. Is this chilling specter that of Marion Lambert, refusing to rest until her case has finally been solved? Or does her ghost still wander in search of redemption for taking her own life on that bitter February day?

We may never know.
Posted by Troy Taylor at 11:20 AM
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# PICTURED: Did F1 tourist capture 'Grim Reaper' looming over friend in this holiday snap?

express.co.uk

**AN F1 fan has spoken of a chill going down his spine when he looked at this picture his cousin took of him sleeping on his return from Dubai after watching the Grand Prix.**

By Jon Austin
PUBLISHED: 15:03, Wed, Jul 22, 2015 | UPDATED: 15:54, Wed, Jul 22, 2015



CAVENDISHNEWS

Craig Nugent, 26, said Daniel Dowling snapped him on a coach from Abu Dhabi where they insist they were travelling alone.

The phantom appears to be in a hooded cloak with a skeletal face like the Grim Reaper.

The only thing missing was the reaper's scythe, which of course could have been in its left hand obscured by the curtain.

The warehouse worker from Birmingham had spent a long and tiring day at the Yas Marina stadium and subsequently fell asleep on the way back.

He says that no one else was near them, only Daniel who was taking the picture, and even he was sat down.



GETTY

He said: "I thought it was a bit of a joke at first. I didn't see it until we arrived back in the UK and my cousin sent me the picture, I couldn't believe it.

"I still can't quite believe it because it really looks like a figure of someone. I just thought what the hell is that?

"It can't be Daniel in the picture because he was sitting opposite me on the seats which is why you can only see the camera flash.

"The coach wasn't full at all, there was only a few people on it to be fair."

The two lads insist there has been no photo trickery or use of sophisticated mobile phone apps, which allow users to choose from a vast array of CGI ghosts, and edit them, or insert their own, before adding them to a normal picture, before fading them to make them appear translucent or blend in.



CAVENDISHNEWS

Paranormal investigators have become increasingly frustrated by the amount of faked ghost pictures doing the rounds online, which are billed as being the real deal.

Specialist Facebook pages have been set up to try to eliminate "ghost app" pictures, but with the growing number of "ghosts" which can be added and the opportunity to edit them, it is becoming increasingly harder.

www.express.co.uk trawled through some of these site to see if Craig and Daniel's "ghost" could have come from an app.



CAVENDISHNEWS•FACEBOOK

We found a number of hooded skeletal figures available, including one which was very similar.

But the two maintain no app was used or editing of the image took place.

Craig said: "I did think it was a joke but Daniel promised me that he hadn't messed with it and I definitely believe him."

He thinks the creepy figure may have been of a woman with long dark hair instead of a cloak, and tilting her head, like "something from a horror film".

He added: "It doesn't hold any relevance, it was just a bit of a shock to this day to see it. I think it's a coincidence that it looks like that.

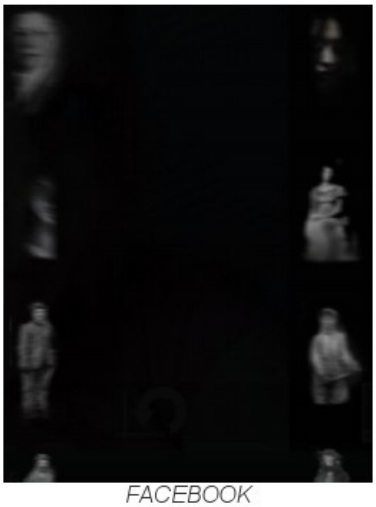
"It was my cousin that noticed it first and he text me telling me, then he showed me and it was nothing but shock."

Post

9 Comments

genieNEW76 days ago

Looks like a man with a beard and sunglasses.



FACEBOOK

KarolineBobrowskiNEW7 7 days ago
If real and not an app, looks like a lady with long dark hair to me. Morgan Le Faye anybody? Have seen a lady phantom myself with long black wavy hair but she was dressed in a white night gown with nothing on her feet and made her arrival with a high pitched scream.

RegKingNEW9 4 days ago
If it's in Abu Dhabi, then it's probably a skinny bird in a burqa....innit.



florence4NEW9 4 days ago
Yippee!.....it's the Grim Reaper coming to collect.....it's more likely the landlord.

BritpatriotNEW9 5 days ago
Completely staged, completely fake, thought up by two morons, with too much time on there hands....next!!

JMacDougallNEW9 6 days ago
that's not the Grim Reaper! It's our lord and saviour Jesus Christ! Rejoice!!

Shy Ted.NEW9 6 days ago
Gerraway.....It's Skeletor from "Masters of the Universe".

cynarchNEW9 7 days ago
Looks more like Michael Jackson than the Grim Reaper!

NormanMilesNEW9 9 days ago
...It is another illegal,trying to get into England.

Saturday, 31st October 2015

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# Hartford Connecticut Newspaper of June 22nd 1784

Whereas of late years there has been advanced for a certainty, by a certain Quack Doctor, a foreigner, that a certain cure may be had for a consumption, where any of the same family had before that time died of the same disease; directing to have the bodies of such as had died dug up, and further said that out of the breast or vitals might be found a sprout or vine fresh and growing, which together with the remains of the vitals, being consumed in the fire, would be an effectual cure to the same family : - and such direction so far gained made in Willington, on the first day of June instant: two bodies were dug up which belonged to the family of Mr. Isaac Johnson of that place, they both died with the consumption, one had been buried one year and eleven months, the other one year a third of the same family then sick – on full examination of the then small remains by two Doctors then present, Viz. Doctors Grant and West, not the least discovery could be made; and to prevent misrepresentation of the facts, I being an eye witness, that under the coffin was sundry small sprouts about one inch in length, then fresh, but most likely was the produce of sorrel seeds which fell under the coffin when put in the earth. And that the bodies of the dead may rest quiet in their graves without such interruption, I think the public ought to be aware of being led away by such an imposture.

– Moses Holmes

Article is copied from Pages xxx-xxxi Preface of Food for the Dead by Michael E Bell 2011 Wesleyan Paperback Edition



# Hearing ghost voices relies on pseudoscience and fallibility of human perception

*20151030*

theconversation.com



*Cqy2wdt2 1445973255*

October 30, 2015
6.06am EDT
Did you hear that?
Rob and Stephanie Levy

Nontrivial numbers of Americans believe in the paranormal. These beliefs have spawned thousands of groups dedicated to investigating paranormal phenomena and a proliferation of ghost-hunting entries in the reality television market. Anecdotal evidence even suggests that ghost-hunting reality shows have increased public openness to paranormal research, which usually entails a small group traipsing through reportedly haunted locales at night with various ghost-hunting technologies.

Audio recorders figure prominently in paranormal researchers' toolkits. Microphones capture ambient sounds during the investigation. Later, the audio recordings are scoured in search of messages from spirits. The premise is that audio recording devices can register otherwise inaudible communications from discarnate entities.

These purported communications have been dubbed electronic voice phenomena (EVP). The sounds are generally brief – most examples consist of single words or short phrases. Perceived contents of EVP range from threatening ("You're going to hell") to bizarre ("Egypt Air").

An EVP recorded at Lizzie Borden's house.

Part of the attraction of the audio recorder for paranormal researchers is its apparent objectivity. How could a skeptic refute the authenticity of a spirit captured by an unbiased technical instrument? To the believers, EVP seem like incontrovertible evidence of communications from beyond. But recent research in my lab suggested that people don't agree much about *what*, if anything, they hear in the EVP sounds – a result readily explained by the fallibility of human perception. Despite the technological trappings, EVP research bears several characteristics of pseudoscience.

**What are the EVP sounds?**

The chain of evidence for most purported EVP makes hoaxes difficult to rule out, but let's

assume that many of these sounds are not deliberate fraud. In some instances, alleged EVP are the voices of the investigators or interference from radio transmissions – problems that indicate shoddy data collection practices. Other research, however, has suggested that EVP have been captured under acoustically controlled circumstances in recording studios. What are the possible explanations for these sounds?

The critical leap in EVP research is the point at which odd sounds are interpreted as voices that communicate with intention. Paranormal investigators typically decode the content of EVP by arriving at consensus among themselves. EVP websites advise paranormal researchers to ask themselves, "Is it a voice…are you sure?" or to "Share results among fellow investigators and try to prevent investigator bias when reviewing data." Therein lies a methodological difficulty.

Research in mainstream psychology has shown that people will readily perceive words in strings of nonsensical speech sounds. People's expectations about what they're *supposed* to hear can result in the illusory perception of tones, nature sounds, machine sounds, and even voices when only acoustic white noise – like the sound of a detuned radio – exists. Interpretations of speech in noise – a situation similar to EVP where the alleged voice is difficult to discern – can shift entirely based upon what the listener expects to hear.



*But if it's not a ghost….*

Valerie Everett, CC BY-SA

**EVP in the perceptual research lab**

In my lab, we recently conducted an experiment to examine how expectations might influence the perception of purported EVP. Our EVP were audio recordings from a ghost-hunting reality show.

We asked three questions: Do people perceive alleged EVP to be voices under controlled conditions? If they hear voices, do they agree about what the voices are saying without being told what they're supposed to hear? And finally, does it matter whether or not they think the research topic is paranormal?

Half of participants were told that the experiment was part of a research project on paranormal EVP. The other half were told that we were studying speech perception in noisy environments – a typical (if perhaps boring) perceptual psychology experiment.

In a study trial, participants heard a sound and were asked if they detected a voice in the stimulus. If they responded "no," the trial ended. If they responded "yes," they reported what they thought the voice had said. Across the study, participants heard the purported EVP, recordings of actual human speech, recordings of human speech obscured in noise, and recordings of only noise. The EVP and speech-in-noise sounds were inherently ambiguous –

they sort of sounded like a voice was present and sort of did not.

Compared to the control condition, the suggestion of a paranormal research topic made people more likely to report hearing voices for both the EVP (48% versus 34% “yes” responses) and the voices hidden in noise (58% versus 40% “yes” responses). For real human speech, all participants nearly always heard a voice (99% “yes” responses), and for noise all participants almost never heard a voice (1% “yes” responses). So suggesting a paranormal research topic mattered only when the audio was ambiguous.

Further, when people said they heard a voice in the EVP, only 13% agreed about exactly what the voice said. To compare, 95% percent of people on average agreed about what the voice said when they heard actual speech.

In one final analysis, we showed that the participants’ interpretations agreed with the paranormal researchers’ interpretations less than 1% of the time. These findings suggest that paranormal researchers should not use their own subjective judgments to confirm the contents of EVP.

But perhaps most importantly, we showed that the mere suggestion of a paranormal research context made people more likely to hear voices in ambiguous stimuli, although they couldn’t agree on what the voices were saying.

**A perceptual explanation of EVP**



Jeff Noble, CC BY

*It can’t just be chance!*

We concluded that EVP are an auditory example of pareidolia – the tendency to perceive human characteristics in meaningless perceptual patterns. There are many visual examples of pareidolia – things like seeing human faces in everyday objects (such as Jesus in a piece of toast).

Research from cognitive psychology has shown that paranormal believers may be especially prone to misperceiving chance events. A face-like configuration in a slice of toast seems meaningful. People ask, “What are the chances?” But if you add up all of the slices of toast you see over the days and weeks and months of a lifetime, it becomes inevitable that you will encounter some of these human-like configurations in toast due to chance.

Similarly, paranormal investigators record a practically limitless amount of audio and use all manner of sound-processing techniques including filtering the sounds to remove particular frequencies and boosting the volume. Inevitably they’re able to find samples of audio that sound somewhat like a voice.

Assuming some of these voice-like sounds can’t be attributed to shoddy data collection

practices, their actual sources likely run the spectrum from ambient environmental noises to electrical interference to audio processing artifacts. If the listener is intently expecting to hear a person, virtually any sound can meet that expectation. One writer aptly suggested that EVP are like an auditory inkblot test: a blank slate upon which the listener can project any interpretation. The tendency for EVP investigators to hear a voice – a meaningful sound with agency and intention – is likely amplified by the suggestion of a paranormal context.



*The technological trappings of ghost hunting can lend a gloss of objectivity.*

P K, CC BY

**EVP research bears hallmarks of pseudoscience**

In pseudoscience, there is a semblance of adherence to the values of science. Objectivity in EVP research is equated with the use of a technological recording device per se, but subjectivity permeates the critical step of interpreting what the sounds mean. In science, objectivity is a critical value for researchers – an ideal that we attempt to apply to all aspects of inquiry – rather than a feature of our equipment.

Another characteristic of pseudoscience is a lack of integration with related areas of inquiry. There is a rich history of using experimental methods to examine auditory perception, yet EVP enthusiasts are either unaware or willfully ignorant of this relevant work.

Science also values parsimony – the idea that the simplest explanation is preferred. To explain EVP as the result of human auditory perception, we need a theory to account for how and why a human listener sometimes misperceives ambiguous stimuli.

In fact, this very tendency is one of many well-documented cognitive shortcuts that may have adaptive value. A voice may indicate the presence of a potential mate or foe, so it may be useful to err on the side of perceiving agency in ambiguous auditory stimuli.

A paranormal theory is much more complex. We have to explain how disembodied entities acquire agency. We have to explain why they have the ability to produce sound but only communicate in audio recordings instead of simply speaking aloud. We have to explain why they apparently can't speak clearly in full sentences, but only brief, garbled, often seemingly random phrases.

**What's the harm?**

Many forms of popular entertainment require the suspension of disbelief, and viewers of paranormal reality shows are hopefully tuning in for the entertainment rather than scientific value of these programs. There are many important public issues, however, for which pseudoscientific beliefs have harmed public discourse.

Currently, there is only limited, tentative evidence to link exposure to pseudoscience on television to pseudoscientific beliefs. Still, one study showed that people find paranormal research to be more credible and scientific when it is shown using technological tools such as recording devices. Other evidence has suggested that popular opinion may outweigh scientific credibility when people evaluate pseudoscientific claims.

A good ghost story may hold entertainment and even cultural value, but the popular portrayal of pseudoscientific practices as science may be detracting from efforts to cultivate a scientifically literate public.

1 Comment

Comments on this article are now closed.

1. **The Ethical Skeptic**

Pseudoscience: A methodology, promotion, skepticism or conclusion which is presented as current best science, or as being derived from the scientific method, when in fact such contentions are false. Categorization of a set of beliefs, set of observations, ideas or an undesirable topic into science or non-science, in absence of a coherent method or through misrepresented methodology or pretense.

Fraud: Publishing pseudoscience in journals and official scientific literature as concluded science, without proper method or backing.

Key traits demonstrated in this article:

1. prejudicial framing a subject before researching it
2. Fails Popper Demarcation of Science - using predictive or 'in my lab' methodology when field data and falsification research avenues are readily available but are ignored.
3. the false practice of regarding an idea observed by a curious person, to constitute a 'belief' the observers' part.
4. the fallacy of regarding the process of observation by a sponsor of an idea, to constitute a presentation of 'science' the sponsors' part. This in an effort to subjugate such activity falsely into the realm of pseudoscience for the simple act of being of curious in nature around a disfavored subject.
5. employment of a single lab experiment to act as plausible deniability basis to invalidate an entire field of research.
6. employment of weak predictive evidence as basis for a final conclusion, which skips peer review and is foisted into the media for public consumption.

I challenge you to do real science here, do real research, quit preaching to your congregation, make clarity and depth your agenda, not fake skepticism, clear your mind, get into the field and do falsification study and ASK THE RIGHT QUESTION and quit resting on your laurels, labs and lauds....


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# History Channel's Bigfoot Captured Was a TV Abomination

pastemagazine.com

By Jim Vorel | November 10, 2015 | 12:00pm



*History Channel's Bigfoot Captured Was a TV Abomination*

Last night, The History Channel aired a two-hour special entitled *Breaking History: Bigfoot Captured*, a title presumably chosen because it directly refers to the mission of said program in breaking any conceivable perception that a network like History Channel might possibly air programs about, oh I don't know, *history*.

Let's say, for a second, in a purely hypothetical scenario, that I was made the supreme overseer of Hell, the realm of eternal punishment and suffering. In Jim's new and revised Hell dimension, there would be a level devoted entirely to television producers who conceived and aired content in the style of *Bigfoot Captured*. There, surrounded by the wailing voices of 10,000 History Channel, Animal Planet and Discovery Channel executives, you would find the crews behind *Mermaids: The Body Found*, *Megalodon: The New Evidence* and others, sharing a cozy abode in the lake of fire. That's my dream scenario.

Of course, in the real world, I suppose I would settle for everyone involved to simply be fired. And possibly put into a pillory and pelted with rotten vegetables, time permitting.

These shows, examples of so-called "docu-tainment" that have become commonplace (and huge ratings successes) on networks that have educational aims in their mission statements, are indicative of everything that is wrong in 21st century media. The fact that you have networks such as History Channel, Discovery and Animal Planet willfully and consciously planting falsehoods into the minds of their audience is absolutely shameful. There's no other word for it. The people involved should be ashamed of themselves, because they are causing very real, literal harm. They're actively performing the polemic opposite of their network's stated function. I see no difference between this and learning that a grade school teacher is teaching your kid that we live in a Geocentric universe.

Your response to this outrage is probably to say "Oh come on, Jim, it's entertainment. People know the sasquatch documentary they're watching on History Channel is just entertainment. What's the harm?"

The problem is that no, not *everyone* knows it's entertainment. And if you're intelligent enough to know that, then you should also realize that it's the impressionable people watching who most need a source they can actually trust in order to provide real information.

These people don't need entertainment. They need a network that's actually serving their best interest—and for the record, their best interest is "Not having pseudoscientific beliefs that they'll pass on to anyone in earshot."

Still don't believe that anyone takes a program like *Bigfoot Captured* seriously? Okay, let me just go check Twitter for 30 seconds, hold on…

> Idk if thats a legit #bigfoot or not, but if it is…Holy shit!!! #BigfootCaptured
>
> — Ron Nopwasky (@ronnopwasky03) November 10, 2015

> So im watching this show where they actually caught a bigfoot but like i still cant decide if this is real or not
>
> — TheMotorCityMadMan (@TGiovannazzo) November 10, 2015

> So apparently Bigfoot has been captured. Is this real? @HistoryChannelX
>
> — Kaitlyn (@kaitlyn_beck) November 10, 2015

> If you don't think Bigfoot is real, you're an idiot
>
> — Caleb Davis (@caleb_davis21) November 10, 2015

> I have no doubt in my mind that Bigfoot is real
>
> — Jack Kelly (@_juicyjack) November 10, 2015

> #BigfootCaptured puts an end to all doubt! Bigfoot is REAL. A species of gigantopithecus.
>
> — Chad (@ChadJones_) November 10, 2015

Those are all real tweets from real human beings that rolled in during the last half hour as I was sitting down to start writing this thing. Whether or not you want to admit it, or whether History Channel wants to admit it, these sentiments are indicative of at least a fair chunk of their audience. They have a *responsibility* to not mislead these human beings. It is their JOB to not allow people to believe this bullshit.

This is the responsibility that History Channel claims it's upholding when a two-hour long program is preceded by a disclaimer on screen for a few seconds saying that the program features "some dramatization." At least, that's what I'm told appeared, because I started watching 60 seconds after the program began. For me, and anyone else who joined at any other point during that ludicrous 120 minute runtime, there was zero other indication that you were seeing anything other than an (admittedly shitty) documentary. Not until the end credits, with its clear listing of actors in the "scripted story" segments, do they come close to admitting what you've been watching that whole time. Good thing that American audiences always closely monitor TV credits, right?

*Bigfoot Captured* takes the form of a fake, feature-length documentary about a researcher traveling the globe in hopes of finding this cryptozoological specimen. This main character, as if this needs to be said, is a fictional person played by an actor. The result: Scenes of actors playing researchers, interviewing other actors playing witnesses. It's essentially a Russian nesting doll of bullshit. None of this is new, and has been the common practice in all the other fictional documentaries such as *Mermaids: The Body Found*, where you can literally look up the actors' names on IMDB.

Where *Bigfoot Captured* diverges, though, is in the rather insidious use of actual people alongside the fake characters. Idaho State University professor Jeffrey Meldrum, for instance, is extensively interviewed and featured; a real university professor and expert in human locomotion who has also studied Sasquatch reports. I found myself wondering: Can this man possibly have known what kind of TV program *Bigfoot Captured* was actually going to be? Did they lie to him, making him think they were conducting an actual documentary about bigfoot sightings? Or did they simply pay this guy, a college professor, enough to participate in a fake documentary knowing full well that it was going to end with five minutes of a CGI Sasquatch in a cage? Because if it's the latter, then that is a massive betrayal of a professor's charge to educate. If Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum knew what kind of program *Bigfoot Captured* was, then he should be summarily fired from his teaching position for failing an educator's version of the Hippocratic Oath. This is a man who has spoken out against Bigfoot hoaxers in the past, and yet here he now is participating happily in a fake documentary, purposely spreading misinformation. I wonder if I could get him on the phone to explain himself if I called Idaho State University often enough.

UPDATE: Dr. Meldrum has posted to Facebook essentially denouncing the production. It seems clear he had no idea what he was getting into. Hilarious.

This style of BS programming has now been refined into a science of its own. The narrative elements are careful in going out of their way to not "tell you what to believe," or at least not directly. Instead, they present you with mounds of fake evidence and rely on the impressionable viewer to "come to their own conclusion." Ignorant, close-minded skeptic characters are used as straw men to shoot down any potential arguments before they're raised. It all taps into the same desire that fuels conspiracy theorists in general—the desire to be a possessor of secret knowledge, to feel intelligent. The History Channel execs understand that the more ignorant portions of their audience desperately want to feel like they belong to a fraternity of people with knowledge that "they" (whoever the hell 'they' are in this

scenario) DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW. Perhaps they already believe these sorts of things —in that case, *Bigfoot Captured* simply triggers their confirmation bias.

Consider this Möbius strip of hypocrisy. In order to be on History Channel in the first place, the program has to make some sort of claim toward veracity—hence, the fake documentary format. Simultaneously, in order to not be called charlatans, the official position of History Channel has to be "people are just watching to be entertained, no one is taking this seriously." SIMULTANEOUSLY, the show has to be believable enough to *still* fool people, because if it didn't, no one would be watching. Just writing that makes my brain want to gnaw its way out of my skull, seeking sweet freedom.

It all culminates in sequences that are, thankfully, so unabashedly ridiculous and SyFy Original Movie-esque that they hopefully would have dissuaded at least some of the potentially duped viewers from believing what they're seeing. I'd like to believe that the sequences of researchers being chased through the woods, pelted with boulders and inserted into what almost feels like a Sasquatch snuff film would be enough to make this clear, but then I just scroll up and re-read those earlier tweets.

Now, the fact that the special *also* pissed off some Sasquatch true believers, I don't even know how to feel about that. Welcome … ummm, allies? I think?

> Never pull some shit like this again, very bad move. You just alienated thousands of believers. Good job! #BigfootCaptured
>
> — cory (@rundiggity) November 10, 2015

> #bigfootcaptured @history The really sad part is this show will hurt and discredit the legitimate Bigfoot research!
>
> — Ty Curtis (@_TYSTA_) November 10, 2015

In the end, the captured Sasquatch of course escapes, although it unfolds in a sequence where it feels like the FX budget had been completely tapped out, so last-minute scenes were added in the 30 minutes before all the video equipment was repossessed. I shit you not, the phrase "I don't think you locked the cage!" is actually uttered. As in, the Bigfoot escapes because the scientists who just tracked him for 10 days didn't remember to lock his cage before they went to sleep. Unfortunately, it ends before we get to see them put up flyers on the nearby redwoods reading "Lost: One Sasquatch. Answers to 'Urrrrrrggghaaaa'".

Is this just the new normal, the standard we should be expecting from a network running commercials during that same programming block for Nostradamus prophecies and a new "Hitler in Argentina" series? At least ABC Family had the guts to admit their own "channel drift" phenomenon by announcing plans to change the name to "ABC Freeform."

Congratulations, History Channel. You've truly earned the title of "that network with less

dignity than ABC Family." Be proud.

*Jim Vorel is Paste's news editor, and he's not a Sasquatch in a sophisticated man-suit, as far as you know. You can follow him on Twitter.*




*History Channel's Bigfoot Captured Was a TV Abomination*

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History of Goshen, NY
From: The History of Orange County, New York
Edited by: Russel Headley
Published by: Van Deusen and ELms
Middletown, New York, 1908

**TOWN OF GOSHEN.**
**By GEORGE F. GREGG.**

NORTHWEST, sixty miles by rail from New York City, sixteen miles in an air line west from the Hudson River, lies Goshen, the county seat of Orange County, located in the geographical center of that civic subdivision. The town derives its name from the Goshen of Biblical memory. Almost two centuries ago the first of the settlers came. The native beauty of the place appealed to the calm and dauntless spirits of these men, who had plunged boldly into a benighted and unknown country. They stood upon the wooded hills and looked with glad eyes upon the fertile, fruitful valley. All around about them lay the land of their desire, and they called it Goshen, the "promised land" of the Scriptures.

The town, which was first known by this name in 1714, was originally much larger than at present. Its boundaries were defined by law in 1788. A part of Hamptonburgh was taken from it in 1830, and a part of Chester in 1845. Other changes of boundaries were made at different times, as recited elsewhere in this article. It has a population today in town and village slightly in excess of 5,000.

The section is known for the great fertility of its soil. It is in the heart of a noted dairying country, and as long ago as Revolutionary days Goshen butter was widely famed. Butter making has practically ceased now, but the milk production is large. The town is also noted for the onions and celery raised on its black dirt meadows, as well as for the grass crops grown on its fertile farms.

The village is located on the main line of the Erie Railroad, and has direct connection with New England cities by way of the N. Y., N. H. & H. R. R. It is also the terminus of the Montgomery & Erie, the Goshen & Deckertown, and the Lehigh & New England Railroads. It is handsomely laid out with broad, well kept and well shaded streets of smooth macadam. It has three public school buildings, and Garr Institute, a parochial school, conducted under the direction of St. John's Church. It has six churches: The First Presbyterian, organized in 1720; St. James's Episcopal, dating back to 1796; St. John the Evangelist, Roman Catholic, founded in 1820; the Methodist Episcopal, organized in 1847; the A. U. M. P. Church, and Olivet Chapel, a Presbyterian colored mission. It has two national banks and a savings bank, two newspapers, gas and electric lighting companies, a waterworks system, and first class hotels and clubs. Its fire department is made up of three volunteer companies, Cataract Engine and Hose, organized in 1843; Dikeman Hose, organized in 1872, and Minisink Hook and Ladder, organized in 1906, upon the disbanding of Elliott H. and L, which was organized

Her eldest son, John Steward II, although holding no commission in the Continental Army was an ardent patriot, mention being made in Rivington's New York Gazette, the Tory organ, that "rebellion in Orange County was continually fomented by those two firebrands, Squire Steward and Old Wisner, the latter being Henry Wisner, member of the Continental Congress and John Steward's friend and neighbor.

John Steward II, who was thirty years younger than Henry Wisner, was a. justice of the peace. and a number of Hessian prisoners passing southward through Goshen, probably after the battle of Saratoga, were quartered over night at his house. The common soldiers slept in the barn, buf the officers, of whom there were several. were accommodated in the house and on leaving the next morning told Mrs. Steward that the coffee made by her black cook was the best they had tasted since leaving Germany.

In a house that stood about too feet east of the present residence of Campbell Steward, Esq., lived General Reuben Hopkins, whose son, Hanibat married Elizabeth Steward, daughter of John Steward II. General Hopkins's portrait and his appointment as attorney at law dated 1771 and signed by Lord Dunmore, now hang on the walls of the Steward house, which contains other objects of interest, among which may be mentioned an original broadside of the Declaration of Independence addressed to John Steward, Esq., his commission as Major No. 1 of the regiment of militia in the County of Orange, signed by Geo. Clinton in 1798, and a bag of old counterfeit silver Spanish dollars. A band of counterfeiters was arrested in Orange County about the time of the Revolution and they were tried at Goshen, their judges, among whom was Judge Steward, keeping some of the coins as curiosities. In the house can also be seen a small stone hammer presented to the wife of John Steward I, as a token of friendship by a member of a band of Indians who, at the time Steward settled in Goshen and for some years after, lived in a hickory grove at the rear of his house. His family always made a point of maintaining friendly relations with their savage neighbors, and were never troubled by them, although once during the French and Indian War on an alarm being given that Indians on the war path were approaching Goshen, the family fled to the cedar swamp. It is said that on leaving they looked back for what they feared might be a last look at their house. but the alarm proved a false one. Goshen was spared an Indian massacre and they returned to find their house still standing. The main body of the house, with some minor alterations, is the same today as it was in those old Indian days, its cedar shingles, oak beams and large stone chimneys seeming still sound and strong. The house being too small for modern requirements, two wings have been added at different times and the chimney tops rebuilt, but care has been taken to preserve as far as possible every antique feature of the house in its original condition.

During Revolutionary days the inhabitants of Orange County were terrorized by the depredations of Claudius Smith, a notorious outlaw, and his gang of ruffians, who were known as cowboys. Smith was indicted on three charges, one of which was the murder of Major Strong. Rewards were offered by Governor Clinton, and Smith was taken captive at Smithtown, L. I., by Major Brush. He was given into the custody of Colonel Isaac Nichol, sheriff of Orange County, and on January 22, 1779, was publicly executed at the west corner of church park in Goshen, with two other criminals, De La Mar, a burglar, and Gordon, a horse thief. On the gallows near the same spot forty years later two others were publicly put

to death for murder.

**BATTLE OF MINISINK.**

On July 22, 1779, occurred the battle of Minisink, in which the Goshen regiment, under Colonel Tusten, met almost complete annihilation at the hands of nearly 500 Indians and Tories under Joseph Brant, the half breed chieftain, who was known as Thayendanegea, the Scourge, and held a colonel's commission from George III. The Goshen regiment marched against Brant's forces to avenge a raid made by Brant upon the settlers near Minisink on the 20th of the month. They were joined by a small reinforcement, under Colonel Hathorn, of the Warwick regiment, and the latter assumed command. While marching along the west bank of the Delaware at nine o'clock on the morning of July 22, the Indians were discovered about three quarters of a mile away and Colonel Hathorn hastened his command in pursuit. Brant, taking advantage of intervening woods and hills made a detour which enabled him to gain the rear of the attacking party, and in the battle which followed the savages completely routed the small force that opposed them. The colonists had little ammunition and this was soon exhausted. A part of them fled, and more were killed in flight than in battle. Colonel Tusten, who was a skilful surgeon, dressed the wounds of his men, and refused to abandon them, staying on the field until he fell. Of the eighty men in the engagement, 44 were killed outright and others died later of their wounds.

Colonel Benjamin Tusten, who was a physician and surgeon by profession, came originally from Southold, L. I., in 1746, at the age of three years. His parents located on the banks of the Otterkill on the patent granted to Elizabeth Denn. His father, Benjamin Tusten, was appointed one of the judges of the courts of the county and also a colonel in the Orange County regiment of militia. The son, Benjamin, was sent to an academy at Jamaica, L. I., and at the age of nineteen returned to Goshen and studied medicine with Doctor Thomas Wiskham. He afterwards studied in Newark, N. J., and New York City, returning in 1769 to practice medicine in Goshen, where two other physicians, Doctor John Gale and Doctor Pierson, had already located. He was very successful and was widely known as a surgeon. He married Miss Brown, by whom he had two sons and three daughters. In 1777 he was appointed lieutenant colonel of the Goshen regiment of militia under General Allison, and in 1778 was appointed surrogate of Orange County, which office he held when he lost his life at Minisink.

Captain John Wood, of Colonel Tusten's regiment, was captured in the battle of Minisink, his life being spared by Brant, who in the thick of the battle, thought he saw Wood give a masonic sign. Wood was taken captive and transported to Canada. He left a journal of events following the battle which throws considerable light on the life and character of Brant.

On July 22, 1822, by the influence of Dr. David R Bernell, of Goshen, a monument was erected in the village to the memory of the men who fell at Minisink. It was set up over the bones of the patriots which had been gathered from the battlefield forty three years after the massacre. On July 22. 1862, a more pretentious monument was dedicated and unveiled, provision for the cost of the same having been made in the will of Dr. Merritt H. Cash, of Minisink.

Goshen village was originally laid out in four lots of eighty acres each. Its original boundaries are not definitely known, as a disastrous fire in 1843 destroyed the town clerk's office, burning up the map of the town and village lots, together with deeds dating from 1714. After these records had been destroyed a new charter was granted on April 18, 1843, fixing the boundaries of the village, which remained under this charter until 1878, when it was abandoned and the village reorganized under the general act. Goshen was incorporated a town on March 28, 1809.

At one time Orange County embraced nearly all the southern part of New York, bordering on the Hudson River. Courts were then held at Orange Town, now in Rockland County. In 1827 they were removed to Goshen. In 1839 the board of supervisors made application to the Legislature to erect a new court house at Goshen. There was considerable opposition from the southern end of the county, which was anxious to secure increased judicial conveniences. As a result, the Legislature effected a compromise, making Goshen and Newburgh joint capitals, and in April, 1841, passed an act authorizing the building of a court house and jail at Goshen and a court house and cells at Newburgh.

**IN THE CIVIL WAR.**

On July 1, 1862, President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 volunteers, and Governor Morgan appointed a military committee for Orange County. Hon. Ambrose S. Murray was the Goshen member. As a result of this call the 124th Regiment, afterwards famed as the "Orange Blossoms" was organized. During the period of organization it was encamped at Goshen, where Murray avenue is now located. Enlistments came rapidly and by August 23 it was ready for the field.

The military committee recommended A. Van Horne Ellis, of New Windsor, for colonel of the regiment and he accepted the commission. Henry S. Murray was made captain of Co. B, which was composed of Goshen men. On August 26, 1862, the regiment was presented with a stand of colors by the women of Orange County. Hon. Charles H. Winfield made the presentation speech. Afterwards, on behalf of the women of Wawayanda, Miss Charlotte E. Coulter presented the regiment with a pair of embroidered silk guidons.

On Friday, September 5, the regiment was mustered in and on the following day departed for the front. It fought in many engagements from Manassas Gap to Lee's surrender at Appomatox, and was disbanded at Washington's headquarters in Newburgh, June 16, 1865, leaving a record of 208 service dead and 609 casualties in action.

When the Civil War was at its height and drafts were necessary to supply the depleted ranks of the Union Army, one interesting incident took place at Goshen. The provost marshal general had ordered a draft for the Eleventh District, comprising the counties of Orange and Sullivan, calling for 1,932 men, with 50% added, making a total of 2,898. This draft was to begin at Goshen on Wednesday morning, October 7, 1863. Trouble was feared by certain of the leading citizens, and they asked that troops be sent to the village to prevent rioting. Accordingly on Tuesday evening, October 6, the Fifth Wisconsin Volunteers, under Colonel Allen. arrived in town. The regiment, which originally numbered 1,300, had been reduced by hard service to 450 men. They made their camp on the elevation which is now Prospect

avenue, and during the night, trained. their cannon to cover the points where crowds would gather in case of rioting. The drawing began on Wednesday and lasted until Saturday and there was no serious disorder. The names were drawn from the wheel by Gabriel Coleman, an aged blind man of the village. Orange County's quota was 2,131, and Sullivan's 767. Goshen furnished 62, of whom three were colored men.

A table of military statistics compiled just before the close of the war showed that Goshen had furnished men as follows at the Government's call: 30 men in 1861; 113 men in 1862; 104 men in 1863; 51 men in 1864.

On Thursday, September 5, 1907, there was dedicated at Goshen a monument to the service dead of the 124th Regiment. The monument, which weighs nineteen tons, is a bronze figure, "The Standard Bearer," designed by Theo. Alice Ruggles Kitson, a noted sculptress. The figure, eighteen feet in height, stands upon a pedestal of Stony Creek granite, fourteen feet high. The monument was presented to the people of Orange County by Hon. Thomas W. Bradley, of Walden, N. Y., Member of Congress from the Twentieth New York District, in memory of his comrades who died in the service of their country. Mr. Bradley enlisted as a private in the "Orange Blossoms," was promoted to captain, and breveted major for meritorious service, and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry at Chancellorsville, May 3, 1863, when he volunteered in response to a call, and alone, in the face of a heavy fire of musketry and canister, went across the field of battle and procured ammunition for his comrades.

The presentation was made by Colonel Charles H. Weygant, who commanded the regiment after the commander, Colonel F. M. Cummins, fell wounded. It was accepted for the people by Mr. John J. E. Harrison, chairman of the board of supervisors, a veteran of Co. B, 56th Regiment, U. S. V., who was wounded at Devon's Neck, S. C., December 7, 1864, and who rendered before and after that time valiant service in the Union's cause. It was accepted also by Captain Robert B. Hock, who was the village president, and was then serving his eighteenth consecutive term in that office. He also had been a soldier with a long and honorable record. He enlisted in the regular army as a bugler, some years before the war, and was assigned to the Tenth U. S. Infantry, and sent to Fort Snelling, Minn. He took part in many expeditions against the Mormons, under General Albert Sidney Johnson, afterwards the confederate general killed at Shiloh. Mr. Hock was later sent to the scene of the Mount Meadow massacre and fought in the battle of Ash Hollow under General Hardy. In 1860 he was a pony express rider when Denver was only a tented village. After Fort Sumter was fired on, his old commander General Tracy, asked him to drill recruits at Staten Island. He did this and later performed the same service at Washington. In 1861 he was commissioned lieutenant of Co. E, 12th New York Cavalry, and in 1863 was made captain of Co. F. He was on the Burnside expedition, at Ball's Bluff and in the second battle of Bull Run. On April 17, 1864, he was taken prisoner at Plymouth, N. C., and confined for three weeks in Andersonville, four months at Macon, one month at Savannah, and one month at Charleston. With six brother officers he escaped from prison at Columbia, S. C., and was tracked by bloodhounds. All the others were recaptured, but he, after suffering terribly by privation and exposure, reached the Union lines and was cared for by the Third Tennessee, until able to report to General Dix in New York. In 1865 in a skirmish with General Bragg's troops his

horse was shot from under him, and he was caught by Bragg's men and sent to Danville, Va. He made a break for liberty and escaped to the brush, rejoining the Union forces just before Lee's surrender. At Bentonville, in a cavalry charge, his horse was killed and he was thrown among the rebel infantry and captured. The same night he escaped, covering himself with dead leaves, and reporting at his company headquarters in the morning. His comrade in rebel prisons, Lieutenant A. Cooper, dedicated a book of his experiences to Captain Hock.

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in 1871. Leading to the village from almost every direction are improved roads, maintained under State supervision.

No mention of the town, past or present, would be complete, without reference to the trotting horse industry. It began in 1803, when Imp. Messenger, acknowledged head of the trotting family, stood at Goshen. Down through all the years trotting horses were bred awl raised there, and even in this day and generation the horse interests are chief among the interests of the town. In the center of the village is located the finest half mile track in the country and many famous horses are trained there.

Every foot of its ground is historic. In the far gone years red men roamed its landscape and predatory beasts lurked in the shadows of its primeval timber lands. It was one of the early settlements made on that vast tract to which Governor Nicolls referred when he wrote in 1664: "The lands which I intend shall be first planted are those upon the west bank of Hudson's River." Shortly after the first settlement a bounty was placed on wolves and the Governor recommended its payment to the House of Lords. Chapter 302 of the laws of 1715, was an act for the destroying of wolves in this section. This act expired July 21, 1717, and on October 29, 1742, the General Assembly found it necessary to pass a law placing a bounty of a shilling and sixpence on "wolves, whelps and panthers."

Noah Webster, of dictionary renown, taught the first academy in Goshen. Dewitt Clinton attended school there, and William H. Seward studied law in the office of Judge Duer. The first newspaper of the county, The Goshen Repository, was published at Goshen in 1788, by David Mandeville.

In the article which follows, the writer has endeavored to furnish a concise history in limited space. As nearly as possible, events are set down in chronological order. Much of interest concerning the town that is based only upon tradition is left out and the space devoted to historical facts that can be authenticated and verified by records, maps, parchments and the writings of earlier and wiser men.

The County of Orange dates its existence by legal enactment from October 1, 1691, in the third year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, and in the administration of Henry Sloughter, Esq., Governor. The First Assembly convened the 9th of April that year. On October it passed an act, Chapter 17, entitled "An Act to divide the province and dependencies into shires and counties." Section VII of this act provided: "The County of Orange to begin from the limits or bounds of East and West Jersey, on the west side of Hudson's River, along the said river to the Murderer's Creek, or bounds of the County of Ulster; and westward into the woods as far as the Delaware River."

Chapter 94, which became a law October 18, 1701, added to the lands embraced in the county those of Wagachemeck and Great and Little Minisinck."

On November 12, 1709, during the administration of Richard Ingoldsby, Esq., Lieutenant Governor, the Eighth Assembly passed an act, Chapter, 202, "to determine, settle and ascertain the bounds and limits of the County of Orange." This act repealed the clause added by Chapter 94, and fixed the bounds as follows: "That the County of Orange shall extend from

the limits and confines of the Province of New Jersey on the west side of Hudson's River, along the said river to the line of the County of Ulster, and westward so far as the Delaware River."

The county derives its name from the Prince of Orange, who married Mary, and came to the throne in 1689, under the name of King William.

Goshen is a part of the tract known as the Wawayanda Patent, acquired of the red men by John Bridges & Company, on March 5, 1703, and confirmed by royal decree of Queen Anne. Twelve Indian sachems conveyed the land. They were Rapingonick, Wawastawa. Moghopuck, Comelawaw, Nanawitt, Arawinack, Rombout, Claus, Chouckhass, Chingapaw, Oshasquememus and Ouilapaw. The patent was granted April 29. There were twelve patentees, namely. John Bridges. LL.D., Hendrick Tenyck, Derrick Vanderburgh John Chotwell, Christopher Denn, Lancaster Syms, Daniel Herran, Philip Rockery, John Meredith, Benjamin Aske, Peter Matthews, and Christian Christianse. The grant was supposed to contain 6o,000 acres, but surveys later showed that it contained nearly 160,000. These twelve patentees held the land in common until 1706, when it was divided into twelve parts. Only eight of the original shareholders retained their interests at that time, Bridges having died in 1704, and others having transferred their holdings.

The tract was unoccupied until 1712, when Christopher Denn made settlement upon it, to be followed shortly by Benjamin Aske; Daniel Cromline, who became a shareholder in 1704; Christian Snedeker, of Long Island; Samuel Staats, who came into record as a thirteenth shareholder in 1713; and John Everett and Samuel Cloves, who in 1714, acquired a tract equal to four of the thirteen shares. The township of Goshen came that year, and the precinct of Goshen, comprising the outlying settlements came later, and remained until 1788 when the township was expanded to take its place.

In 1712, Christopher Denn, a carpenter by trade and resident of New York City, paid a visit to the patent and determined to make a settlement upon it. He and his wife, Elizabeth, were childless, but had adopted an orphan girl, Sarah Wells.

Denn selected a spot along the Otterkill, as it is now known, about two miles or more from the present village. He returned to New York, equipped an expedition, which he sent up the Hudson River in charge of his adopted daughter, accompanied by two white men and some Indians whom he had taken to New York when returning from his first visit. A raft was used for the voyage and a landing safely made near Cornwall. The journey to the spot selected by Denn was through a trackless forest, but was made without mishap and a rough cabin was built. After the starting of the expedition Denn was remorseful because he sent the girl into unknown dangers, and within a short time he started for the new settlement, with his wife. The journey was made on horseback. They arrived safely and took up permanent residence there.

It appears from an old map that Denn's share of the patent was a triangular tract, containing about 2,000 acres. The presence of this family soon brought other settlers and the woodman's axe resounded far and near. The merciless push of immigration began and the native red men were driven further into the wilderness. In the course of a few years Sarah

Wells became the wife of William Bull, of Wolverhampton, England, who came to this country and was employed by Daniel Cromline in 1716 to build the masonry of a dwelling, later known to fame for nearly a century as the Greycourt House. History records this as the first marriage within the limits of the town of Goshen.

The lands in the vicinity of the present village were settled to some extent soon after Denn's arrival. There were on record deeds showing the conveyance of lots in the village in 1714. On July 10, 1721, a deed in trust was made to John Yelverton by John Everett, John Carpenter, John Gale, William Ludlum, Nathaniel Higby, John Carpenter, Jr., G. McNish, James Sandys, Thomas Watson, Hope Rodes, John Holly, James Jackson, Isaac Finch, Solomon Carpenter, John Beers, Michael Dunning, Samuel Seely, John Nichols, 'William Jackson, Alexander Moore, John Knapp, Samuel Webb, John Alsop and Richard Halsted, setting forth that a conveyance had been "lately" made to John Everett and Samuel Clowes, giving them one sixth part of all the lands for the purpose of laying out a township, establishing a church and settling a minister.

The Goshen Presbyterian Church was organized in 1720, and Rev. John Bradner, to whom more extended reference is made later in this article, became its pastor in 1721. Two hundred acres of land were deeded to him on April 17, 1722, and recorded at the request of his widow on April 8, 1742. In 1724 the erection of a house of worship was begun on the spot where now stands the court house. The first court was cenvened in Goshen in 1727, and on December 16, of that year an act was passed providing for the building of a court house and jail, which were erected and completed in 1740, on the site of the present Orange Hotel. On October 24, 1754, the General Assembly appropriated 100 pounds for an addition to it, and in 1775 it was demolished and a new one built at a point where now stands the county clerk's office. The arms of King George III were placed upon its front, but were torn down by indignant citizens.

A schoolhouse was built in 1801 on the church plot, the same spot where the public school building on Greenwich street now stands. Here Noah Webster taught for a time before he published his first dictionary in 1806.

Goshen, after its original settlement, soon became the most important and populous district of the county, and a census taken in 1738 showed a total of 319 males above the age of ten. These were stirring times for the people and most of the affairs were of a warlike nature. There was frequent trouble with the Indians. The frontier was only four miles away. Block houses were built at Dolsontown and Scotchtown, and tradition has it that a block house once stood back of the present race course on the property known today as the Parkway Farm. In those days the settlers west of the Wallkill made Goshen their rendezvous when Indian raids were feared.

In the reign of George II, when Hon. George Clinton was Governor, the General Assembly passed an act to enable the inhabitants of Goshen in the County of Orange to elect two additional constables, This act explained that the inhabitants of the Precinct of Goshen had liberty to elect only one constable and as the precinct had considerably increased in numbers of inhabitants and settlements, it was necesssary that an increased number be elected. The

act was passed December 17, 1743, and provided that one of the constables "be elected and chosen from and out of such of the inhabitants as have habitations in the south part of Goshen, commonly called Wawayanda, and the other from and out of such of the inhabitants as have habitations northward near the meeting house, commonly called the Water Side Meeting House.

On September 21, 1744, the General Assembly passed an act to authorize justices of the peace in the counties of Dutchess and Orange to "direct so many constables and overseers of the highways to be chosen, in the several precincts as to them shall seem meet." On the same day an act was passed for the relief of the poor in the counties of Orange and Suffolk.

**COVENANT CHAIN TREATY.**

During these years the settlers had as allies two tribes of Indians, sometimes known as the Cashigton Indians, whose principal lodges were located near where now stands the village of Cochecton in Sullivan County. They formed a part of the Lenni Lenape, or Delaware Confederacy, once powerful, but at that time reduced in numbers. From time immemorial Western Orange had been their hunting ground, but late in the year 1744 they showed signs of distrust and retired to their lodges on the upper Delaware. The colonists were loath to lose these faithful allies, for their withdrawal left the outlying settlements on the frontiers exposed to attack of hostile savages, incited to rapine and murder by the French.

The attention of the Colonial Government was called to this matter and Colonel DeKay was ordered to take a parity and visit the Indians in the hope that friendly relations might be restored and the redmen induced to return to their old hunting grounds. As a result of this visit the Indian Treaty of Orange County was enacted and the ceremony of the Covenant Chain performed at Goshen. Colonel Thomas DeKay took with him, upon this expedition, Major Swartout, Ensign Coleman, Adam Weisner. who acted as interpreter, Benjamin Thompson, and two Minisink Indians as guides. The pilgrimage was made in the depth of winter. The Indians were found and agreed to come back, claiming that they left because they were afraid of the people of Orange County, who were always under arms. When it was explained that this was by order of the Governor and for protection against the French and their allies, the Indians rejoiced. They explained that they were of two tribes, using for totems the signs of Mini, or Wolf, and Uralaclitgo, or Turkey, and that their sachem had recently died. They were about to choose a new sachem to govern all, and they promised that when he had been chosen they would send representatives to make a treaty. New Year's Day was fixed upon as the date.

On January 3, 1745, two days late, the Wolves and Turkeys, a dozen of the head men in all, led by the new sachem, came into the village of Goshen and marched in savage bravery up its main street. Just where the ceremony took place is unknown, but the old manuscript record says that the weather was severe, and it is probable that the meeting was held in the rude court house. The Indians by their spokesman explained that they had brought a Belt of Wampum that friendship and brotherhood might be restored. They asked that some one be appointed to enact with them the ceremony of the Covenant Chain.

Colonel DeKay informed them that the Governor alone had power to make such an

appointment and that as there was not time to communicate with him, it would be best for the Indians to select a man. They chose the colonel and he was then chained to them for an hour or more as a token of their being united again in the bonds of friendship. Speeches were made by the Indians and they solemnly pledged themselves to be true "as long as the sung and moon endured," and promised to send in runners at once if they learned of any plots against the English. They also agreed to join in fighting the enemy and asked that aid be given them in case of attacks by the French. This was freely promised and while the Colonel was still chained to the Indians they gave him the Belt of Wampum to be sent to the Governor. The Indians, according to the record, "again rejoiced with three huzzas and departed very much pleased." The Belt of Wampum, so states the books of the Lords of Trade and Plantations in London, was taken to the Colonial Council in New York by Colonel Dehay a fortnight later and delivered to the Council, which in turn sent it to the Governor, who recommended that one be given in return to the Indians. This was the only occasion on record when the ceremony of the Covenant Chain was enacted in Orange County.

On April 18, 1748, an act was passed by the General Assembly providing that "for the time to come, all elections of representatives of the County of Orange to serve in the present or any future General Assembly shall begin and be first opened at the court house in Orange Town, or at the court house or some other convenient place in the town of Goshen."

About this time settlers who had dealings with the sheriff began to find considerable fault with the manner in which mileage charges were computed. On April 8, 1748, an act was passed providing that for all writs and process papers served on inhabitants on the north side of the mountain range called the Highlands, mileage should be computed by the sheriff from the court house in Goshen, and for all papers served on the south side from the court house in Orange Town. The preamble to this act fully explained the situation. It stated: "Whereas the County of Orange is very extensive in length, and by reason of a ridge of mountains across the same, and for the better accommodation of inhabitants, it was found necessary to have two court houses, the one at Goshen on the north, and the other at Orange Town on the south thereof; yet by the sheriff having his residence sometimes at the one and sometimes at the other extreme of the said county, the computation of his fees for mileage in the service of writs hath hitherto been made from the place of the sheriff's abode, which has been found to be very inconvenient and burdensome to the parties concerned."

**MILITARY MATTERS.**

When the French and Indian War began in 1756 the men of Goshen were continually under arms. The old Journal of the Assembly relates the services of Captain George DeKay as express between Goshen and Minisink. It mentions as his guards Peter Carter, David Benjamin, Philip Reid and Francis Armstrong. It tells also of the payment of nearly too pounds to Colonel Vincent Mathews for furnishing guides to regulars posted at Goshen from October, 1757, to February, 1758, and refers to the work of Colonels Clinton and DeKay in laying out block houses for the settlers' defense. Mention is also made of the payment of 56 pounds to Samuel Gale for provisions furnished troops on the frontiers near Goshen; and of reimbursing Colonel Benj. Tusten, Captain Daniel Case and Captain J. Bull for money advanced in building block houses Nos. t and 2 on the western frontier in January, 1757.

In 1763, Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Golden appealed to the General Assembly for troops to relieve the militia on the borders of Orange and Ulster which were infested by the enemy. At this time the town of Goshen extended from the Hudson to New Jersey. In 1764 a bill was passed dividing the precinct of Goshen into two precincts, to be called Goshen and Cornwall. After this division Cornwall embraced the present towns of Cornwall, Monroe and Blooming Grove, while Goshen included the present town of Warwick.

During the years prior to the Revolution when the colonists were growing desperate under the exactions of King George, patriotism and valor were manifested to a marked degree in Goshen. On June 8, 1775, over 360 men signed the Revolutionary pledge at Goshen and the name of Henry Wisner headed the list. The Reverend Nathan Ker, an ardent patriot, and the fourth pastor of the Goshen Presbyterian Church, who came to Goshen in the fall of 1766, and remained until his death, December 14, 1804, on one occasion is said to have dismissed his congregation in the midst of a Sunday service to prepare food for a troop of horse that had halted on the way to Philadelphia. Once General George Washington, riding eastward on the Florida road towards his headquarters at Newburgh, stopped with his staff to chat awhile with the children at the old school house near the stone quarry.

**NOTABLE EARLY RESIDENTS.**

Many of the old families of Goshen today are descendants of the patriots who fought in the colonial service and whose names appear on the roster of the Goshen regiment at the battles of Long Island and White Plains, at the struggle in the Highlands, and the capture of Fort. Montgomery, as well as in the memorable slaughter of Minisink.

The highway between Goshen and Florida, over which Washington rode, is a historic thoroughfare and in Revolutionary clays was lined with the homes of famous men. Goshen was then the stronghold of the Whigs. In a stone house nearly opposite the present Sayer homestead, lived Moses Hatfield, a captain, afterwards a major, in the Goshen regiment, who was taken prisoner at a night assault on what is now Randall's Island, on September 23, 1776, and was kept a captive until 1778.

A little further along the way lived Henry Wisner, the elder. He and his son of the same name were makers of powder for the Continental Army at Phillipsburg, between the highway as it now stands and the grist mill near by. Traces of the old raceway and mill can still be seen. Another on the opposite side of the stream, and one at Craigville, operated in conjunction with John Carpenter, were also erected by Henry Wisner. The Sons of the Revolution arranged some years ago to mark the site of the Phillipsburg powder mill by an historical tablet.

Henry Wisner stood foremost among those who advocated the independence of the colonies. He represented Orange County in the Continental Congress which declared that "these States are; and of right ought to be, free." His son Gabriel, hardly past his majority, was slain in the slaughter of Minisink. On the 16th of August, 1774, Henry Wisner was chosen as one of the delegates to represent Orange County in the Continental Congress held in Philadelphia in September of that year. The election was by the committee of the county held at the house of Stephen Slot and the purpose was for the delegate to attend at Philadelphia "to consult on

proper measures to be taken for procuring the redress of our grievances."

A question was raised as to the regularity of this election and a meeting of the inhabitants of the precincts of Goshen and Cornwall was held at Chester on September 3, 1774, at which Henry Wisner was chosen to go to Philadelphia "in order to meet the rest of the delegates and consult on proper measures to be taken with respect to the claims made by the British Parliament of taxing America in all cases whatsoever."

William Wickham was a prominent citizen of Goshen, and his attitude was one of extreme loyalty to the crown. With other adherents of the king he attempted to set aside the election of Wisner. The correspondence, which still exists, shows that political feeling was very bitter. The scheme came to naught and Wisner took his seat. In Aprils, 776, he was elected by a convention held at New York City, as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress in which he took part, leaving it for the purpose of manufacturing powder for Washington's tattered army.

Mr. Wisner's signature may still be found in the list at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. He continued in Congress until the memorable 2nd of July, 1776, when the "Resolution of Independency" was passed. He was heartily in favor of the measure and remained for the purpose of casting his vote for its final passage, had the Provincial Congress of New York given such instructions to its delegates. Tradition affirms that he actually did vote for the "independency" that day. He was not present to sign the Declaration. He had proposed in Congress "a method for the manufacture of saltpetre and gunpowder" which had been approved, and in agreement with which he was requested or appointed to build works and prepare powder for the "Army of the North." To do this he left Philadelphia on the third of July and applied himself to the making of powder. For three years, and until his mill was burned and his fortune exhausted, he continued to supply powder to the American forts and thus beyond any man in the Continental Congress of 1776 contributed to his country's triumph.

On the square at St. James' Place in the village of Goshen stands a monument of native Pochuck granite erected to the memory of Henry Wisner by his great granddaughter, Mrs. Frances Wisner Murray, widow of Ambrose Spencer Murray, of Goshen. The monument was dedicated on July 22, 1897, by Dr. John H. Thompson, who presided and Harrison W. Benny, Esq., who made the dedicatory address.

Adjoining the residence of Henry Wisner, and separated from it by what is now known as Steward's lane, was the home of John Steward, an ardent patriot. He was one of two brothers, John and Walter Stewart, or Steward, the name having been spelled both ways, who came from Ireland to New England about 1740. Walter settled in Rhode Island, where he started a snuff mill and became the father of Gilbert Stuart, the noted portrait painter, whose unfinished picture of Washington is the likeness that the world knows best today. Gilbert after reaching manhood, wrote his name Stuart, because by reason of the fact that his ancestry was by tradition connected with the Jacobite cause, he had a great admiration for "Bonny Prince Charlie."

The tradition was that, at the time of one of the early Jacobite risings, a nurse in charge of two young children appeared in Belfast, Ireland. They came from Scotland and the Boman

immediately on arriving fell ill of small pox and died refusing to tell anything about the children except that their names were John and Walter Stewart, and that they were the sons of a man of rank who would soon come for them. She had with her no money but some fine jewels, no one ever came to claim the children, but as it is recorded in history that some Jacobite families are known to have been exterminated in their bloody and unfortunate battles, this may have been the fate of the relatives of these boys, too young to tell anything about themselves. They were brought up by a man, appointed their guardian. He treated them harshly and as soon as grown they left him and came to try their fortune in a new land. John first acquired some property in Boston, which he left in his will to his son Nathan, but soon came to Goshen and settled there, buying in 1744 eighty acres of land, "and the houses thereon" from William Jayne. From this it appears that the Steward house may have been erected previous to 1744, but "houses thereon" may have been a mere legal term, and the house was probably built by John Steward. It is certain, however, that it has been standing since 1744. He bought more land, about 120 acres in all, at a later date. To farming John Steward joined the occupation of blacksmith, erecting a little to the left of his house a forge, which was in operation as early as 1758, the family having still in their possession, a deed of sale bearing that date of a slave named Tite, warranted to be a good blacksmith. Later at this forge, John Steward II, during the Revolutionary war made sabres and bayonets for the Continental Army.

John Steward I, married Elizabeth Bradner, the daughter of Rev. John Bradner, first settled clergyman in Goshen. As John Bradner was the father of nine children. viz., Colviet John, Benoni, Gilbert, Susanna, Mary, Sarah, Christian and Elizabeth, and to him many families in Orange County trace their descent, the following may be thought worthy of record. When a young divinity student in Edinburgh, Scotland; John Bradner was employed by a gentleman called Colvill, a Huguenot refugee, as a tutor to his sons. His daughter Christiana shared her brothers' studies and she and the tutor fell in love with each other, but Colvill thought the tutor no match for his daughter, and told her if she married him he would never speak to her again. She put love before duty and having married John Bradner they sailed for America. The voyage occupied six months. Violent storms in which the ship nearly foundered were encountered. These Mrs. Bradner thought were sent by Heaven to punish her for her disregard of her father's wishes. Rev. John Bradner received the degree M.A. from the University of Edinburgh, February 23rd, 1712, was licensed to preach March, 1714, ordained May 6, 1715, pastor of Cold Spring Presbyterian Church, Cape May, N. J., before being called to the church in Goshen, 1721. He died 1732. His widow. died 1759. She was well educated in the classics and assisted in preparing her son, Rev. Benoni, for Princeton College. He graduated 1715, was settled in Jamaica, L. I., 1760, and two years after was called to Church Nine Partners, Dutchess County. There is now in the possession of Mrs. M. H. C. Gardner, of Middletown, a piece of a quilt brought from Scotland by Mrs. John Bradner. The colors of the design, birds, fruit and flowers, are as bright as though it was new. John Steward I had eight children and their mother used to relate with pride that never once during their infancy or childhood was she obliged by reason of the illness of one of them to strike a light during the night. John Steward I died in 1770, of a fever then epidemic. In his will he left to his widow, as long as she remained his widow, the use of the best room and the "salon" room. The small adjoining room, now a store closet, was her prayer closet, where she used to retire to pray, as was the good custom of those times.

**Friday, February 1, 2013**

## THE MURDER OF WILLIAM DESMOND TAYLOR

On this date, February 1, 1922, William Desmond Taylor, one of the most famous movie directors in early Hollywood, was murdered in his bungalow in the Westlake District of Los Angeles. At first, it was assumed that he died of natural causes – until someone discovered that he had been shot in the back by a .38-caliber revolver.

Taylor's murder became one of the most sensational cases in the annals of Hollywood crime and one that has never been close to being solved. The coroner's jury, at a crowded inquest, had no choice but to return an open verdict. Fantastic rumors made the rounds of the film colony. There was an entire "cast of killers" blamed for his death and the gossips named suspects that ranged from an actress who had killed him in a jealous rage over another actress, the husband of a woman Taylor had elevated to stardom on the proverbial "casting couch, and even a butler with whom the director was having a homosexual affair.



***William Desmond Taylor, one of the most famous directors in Hollywood in the early 1920s***

Taylor's murder continues to be talked about today, largely because of the many bizarre facts that were uncovered by investigators as they tried to piece together what really happened in the case. Taylor was known in Hollywood as a man of many romances. Was he murdered by a jealous rival, either a man or woman? Was he killed by some figure from his past, which the investigation discovered was more than a little disreputable? Was he killed by someone who broke into his bungalow to rob the place and was caught in the act? Were two of Hollywood's most beloved celebrities, Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter, who were labeled by the press as "rival lovers" of the dead man, somehow involved in the crime?

None of these questions have ever been answered, largely thanks to representatives from

white sheet, came running toward them and shouted, “I am the ghost of William Desmond Taylor. You murdered me. Confess, Peavey!”

Peavey burst out laughing. Then, realizing what the trio had tried to do to him, he loudly and furiously denounced them all. On a side note, Al Weinshank later became one of the gangsters killed during the infamous St. Valentine's Day Massacre in Chicago.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:28 AM

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Paramount Pictures (which employed both Taylor and Minter) and their deliberate tampering with the murder scene evidence. It was no secret at the time that the LAPD was under the thumb of Adolph Zukor, the powerful head of Paramount, and the investigation, which had already been bungled by careless police work, was further hampered by his efforts. Paramount could hardly be blamed for attempting some damage control in this latest disaster. It was already trying to cope with the fallout from the Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle scandal in 1921. To counter the sordid reputation that had befallen the industry, Hollywood (led by Adolph Zukor) had hired U.S. Postmaster General Will Hays to introduce the Production Code, which would censor Hollywood products and publicly keep the morality of the industry in check. Now, with the facts in the Taylor case pointing to sex, alleged drug dealing, and more, the world was stunned, horrified, and of course, fascinated by every lurid development that came along.

Taylor was born William Cunningham Deane-Tanner on April 26, 1872 in Carlow, Ireland, located south of Dublin. He was the second of four children born to a British army officer and his Irish society wife. His father ran the household like a military barracks and father and son quarreled often. When William was 15 years old, he left home and went to England. By 1890, using the name Cunningham Deane, he began performing on the stage. When his father learned of this dishonor to his family name, he demanded that William enroll at Runnymede, an establishment in Kansas that turned disreputable and wealthy young men into respectable farmers. William traveled to the Midwest and remained at the institution for 18 months. After the school went bankrupt and closed down, he decided to stay in America.

He traveled to New York and earned a living as a manual laborer, a magazine salesman, a gambler, and as the modestly successful owner of a small restaurant. Soon, however, he returned to the stage. In 1895, he went to work on Broadway and then toured with actress Fanny Davenport and her company. That position ended when Davenport died in 1898.

By that time, William had met Effie Hamilton, a pretty young chorus girl from a wealthy family. The couple was married in December 1901 and the following year, their daughter, Ethel Daisy, was born. Effie never returned to the stage and William decided to take up a new line of work to support his family. With a $25,000 loan that he acquired from his in-laws, he bought out two eastside Manhattan antique stores. He was a great success in this new trade and the family lived well in suburban Larchmont.

In 1908, though, everything fell apart. There was gossip that several vintage items sold in his shops were fakes. A planned inheritance from Effie’s uncle never materialized after the elderly uncle married, then died, leaving everything to his new spouse. William began drinking heavily and then it was discovered in the summer of that year that he took a vacation trip to the Adirondacks with a woman who was not his wife. Unable to pay a sizable hotel bill, he gave the owner a diamond ring as security.

In September 1908, William vanished from New York after pilfering $600 from one of the antique stores. He sent $500 of it to Effie and used the rest to start a new life. He never returned to his family and in 1912, Effie filed for divorce. She later married a wealthy

restaurant owner. Her former husband, meanwhile, re-created himself as William Desmond Taylor and began working with an acting troupe in New Jersey. Never more than a workman-like performer, he soon turned to other employment, like factory work and gold mining in Colorado, the Yukon, and northern California. He gained a reputation as a ladies' man and a hard drinker and his years on the road were certainly colorful ones. Eventually, he ended up back on the stage and was performing in San Francisco when he was hired by filmmaker Thomas Ince to appear in silent pictures.

Taylor moved to Southern California and began working at Ince's studio in Santa Monica. By 1914, he was working for Vitagraph and starring in "Captain Alvarez." As a side note, this film was re-issued in 1918 and was seen by Taylor's daughter, Ethel Daisy, in New York, which is how she learned of his new profession. This led to a good relationship between Taylor and his daughter.

By this time, Taylor was in his mid-40s and knew that he would never make much of a success for himself on the screen. He decided to switch to directing. He was working for the Balboa Amusement Producing Company in Long Beach when he met and fell in love with leading lady Neva Gerber. Unfortunately, Neva was 20 years old, married, and had a child and a much older husband who refused to divorce her. She got involved with Taylor anyway, but learned that Taylor was subject to bouts of great melancholy. Sometimes, after completing a new picture, he left on trips to Northern California, and always remained vague about where he was going and what he was doing there. Later, when Neva was single again, she decided that the troubled director was not good marriage material. However, the two remained close friends.

Taylor's career continued to advance and in the middle 1910s, he switched studios again. Taylor was brought to Pallas Pictures by Julia Crawford Ivers, a screenwriter, producer, and director. When Pallas was bought out by Paramount, Julia and Taylor often worked together and maintained a close friendship that might have been spurred on by romantic hopes on her part. At Paramount, Taylor became very successful, directing a steady stream of major pictures.

In the fall of 1917, Taylor was allowed time off from Paramount to join the Canadian Army and serve in World War I. By August 1918, he was based in Nova Scotia for military training and then shipped out to England. Although the war was over by the time he arrived, the filmmaker asked to be stationed in France until his discharge. By the spring of 1919, he had risen to the rank of major.

Taylor returned to Hollywood later that year and got right back to work for Paramount. One of his first major films was "Anne of Green Gables" starring Mary Miles Minter. He was named to the position of president for the Motion Pictures Directors Association and settled into an affluent Hollywood life. He moved from the Los Angeles Athletic Club to one of eight bungalows that made up Alvarado Court, located in a pleasant section of L.A. and favored by movie industry insiders. Among those living at Alvarado Court was comedy actor Douglas MacLean, and his wife, members of Taylor's elite social circle. Taylor hired staff to run his

household, including Edward F. Sands as a combination secretary, valet, and cook and Earl Tiffany, who often worked as his driver.

During the spring of 1921, Taylor had surgery and went abroad in June to recover. While he was away, he loaned out his bungalow to playwright Edward Knoblock in exchange for the writer's London apartment. To make sure that his guest was comfortable, Taylor foolishly left a signed blank check for Edward Sands to use in case of an emergency. While his employer was away, Sands not only cashed the check in the amount of $5,000, but he also forged a number of smaller checks from Taylor's accounts. A week before Taylor returned home, Sands vanished. When he arrived, Taylor discovered that, in addition to the missing funds, Sands had also stolen much of his wardrobe, some jewelry, a number of personal items, and an automobile, which was later found wrecked. Taylor filed a report with the police and then, a few months later, he received a letter from Sands, half-heartedly apologizing for what he had done. The note also contained two pawn tickets for diamond cuff links that Mabel Normand had given to the director. Sand's job at Taylor's home was taken over by Henry Peavey.



***Mabel Normand***

Mabel Normand, then 27, had built her career as the "Queen of Comedy" working for Keystone Studios, which was run by her mentor and close friend, Mack Sennett. In 1918, she signed with producer Samuel Goldwyn to make features and during this time, the popular actress developed a serious cocaine habit. Later, she became romantically involved with Taylor, who was sympathetic to her drug problem. He tried to get her off the drugs and keep her away from the dealers who were feeding her dangerous and, if the public found out, scandalous habit.

Another woman in Taylor's complicated life was Mary Miles Minter, then 19 years old, whom he had directed in three 1920 features. Under the watchful eye of her controlling stage mother, Charlotte Selby, doe-eyed Minter looked on Taylor as both a father figure and a dashing hero. She fantasized about marrying and continually pursued him, despite his efforts to dissuade her.



***Mary Miles Minter***

On Wednesday, February 1, 1922, Taylor spent the evening at his bungalow, working on income tax reports from the previous year at his desk in the living room. Henry Peavey, Taylor's cook and valet, later told the police that he summoned Taylor to dinner at around 6:30 p.m. The director was eating his solitary meal when he received a telephone call. He was still engaged in this conversation (no one knows who the call was from) when Mabel Normand stopped by Taylor's bungalow to pick up two books that he had recently purchased for her. Peavey let Mabel into the house as Taylor hung up the telephone, and then proceeded to mix a couple of drinks.

Peavey left the house about 7:30 p.m. after first going out to chat with Mabel's driver. When he wished Taylor good night, he and Mabel were sitting on the sofa sipping cocktails. According to Mabel, she left the bungalow at a little before 8 p.m. Taylor walked the actress to her car, leaving the front door standing open behind him. She waved as her driver pulled away from the curb and Taylor returned to the house. At midnight, actress Edna Purviance, who also lived at Alvarado Court, returned home and noticed that all of the lights were still on at Taylor's home, but she thought it was too late to stop for a visit.

The following morning, Peavey reported to work at 7:30 a.m. and let himself into the house with his own key. He walked into the living room and found the director's body sprawled out, face-up, on the living room floor. He looked as though he had fallen and an overturned chair was across his legs.

As news spread around Alvarado Court, several of the residents hurried over and entered Taylor's home, contaminating the crime scene. When Taylor's new driver, Howard Fellows, arrived at the house, he telephoned the news to his brother. The brother, Harry, was an assistant director who worked with Taylor at Paramount. He contacted Charles Eyton, Paramount's general manager, and told him of Taylor's death. Eyton ordered Harry, along with Julia Crawford Ivers and her son James (Taylor's cinematographer), to rush to Taylor's home. Their instructions were to remove any incriminating evidence that could damage the filmmaker's reputation --- which would look bad for the studio.

At this point, no one had yet called the police.



***Taylor's Alvarado Court Bungalow***

Julia, James, and Harry Fellows hurried to the bungalow and gathered up anything they could find that might shed a bad light on Taylor. They took letters to Taylor from Mabel Normand, Mary Miles Minter, and Neva Gerber, as well as notes from Ethel Daisy to her father. They also removed bootleg liquor from the house, just minutes before the police finally arrived.

As law officers were starting to take statements from the Taylor's staff, and from the neighbors, Charles Eyton arrived. Because of his importance in Los Angeles, the police did not stop him from going into the house for a look around. They also didn't question him when he came back out, checking to see if her had moved anything or had taken anything from the scene.

A short time later, the deputy coroner and his assistant arrived and it was only then that it was discovered that Taylor had been shot in the back. This was a surprise to everyone at the scene, and the homicide squad was called in to handle the case. The revelation came as such of a shock because the first officers at the scene believed that Taylor had died of a stomach hemorrhage. They came to this conclusion because a doctor had earlier been in the neighborhood making a house call and came by to see what all of the excitement was about. Without turning the body over, the doctor offered his snap diagnosis. The cops made a note of it, but failed to obtain the doctor's name. The physician left the scene and was never heard from again.

A horde of reporters soon descended on Alvarado Court and a flurry of wild accusations, rumors, crazy theories, and outright lies began to be published all over the country. Some newspapers insisted that the killer had to be the missing Edward Sands, a theory that was eventually dismissed. For a time, journalists also suggested that Henry Peavey was the culprit. Since he was African-American and a homosexual, he was the natural culprit. On the day after the murder, Taylor had been scheduled to appear in court on Peavey's behalf in a sexual misconduct allegation. Because of this, it was hinted by the media that Taylor might have been a "gay bird" and that this "fact" might have something to do with his murder. Peavey was cleared of murder, but rumors that Taylor may have been gay, or at least bisexual, have remained ever since.

With these kinds of stories, rumors, and innuendoes running rampant, it was hard to tell where the truth ended and fantasy began. Taylor's closest neighbors, the MacLeans, told the police that their maid heard someone in the alley between their house and Taylor's after 7 p.m. on the night of the murder. Later, when Mrs. MacLean heard a noise that sounded like a car backfiring, she had looked outside and saw a person leave Taylor's bungalow and walk calmly away. She described this person as a "roughly dressed man," wearing a cap and a scarf. However, it was later learned that a friend of Taylor's had borrowed his car for the evening and had returned it to his house that same night. After parking it in the garage, he went to the door, but when he got no reply, he left. The police believed that he was the figure seen by Mrs. MacLean that night.

Mystery was added to the mystery and the investigation was certainly not helped by L.A. District Attorney Thomas Woolwine, who had close ties to major players in the movie industry. One newspaper accused the district attorney of "erecting a barricade of silence between the searchers for truth and the truth itself." The investigation was being badly handled, even hamstrung, in an effort to protect Taylor and the studio, but some of the witnesses hindered things even further by withholding information in an effort to protect their own reputations. When Mabel Normand was questioned by the police, she did her best to downplay her romantic relationship with Taylor. She was also deliberately vague on other issues involving herself and the director, especially when it came to her drug problem and Taylor's efforts to help her break the habit.



***L.A. District Attorney Thomas Woolwine***

The newspapers continued to hamper the investigation, as well. In a rush for lurid headlines, journalists were quick to report the discovery of Mary Miles Winter's monogrammed pink "lingerie" at Taylor's house. The young actress denied this and the "lingerie" turned out to be a monogrammed handkerchief that she had once loaned him. However, the initial distorted information suggested to the public that the supposedly demure Mary and the much-older Taylor were having a clandestine romance. This theory was given further credence by a note that was discovered tucked inside a book of erotic writing that was on the shelf in Taylor's well-stocked library. On the stationary were the initials M.M.M. The letter read:

*Dearest, I love you. I love you. I love you.*

*XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX*
*Yours always, Mary*

When Mary was questioned about this, she admitted, “I did love William Desmond Taylor, I loved him deeply and tenderly, with all of the admiration that a young girl gives to a man with the poise and position of Mr. Taylor.” Those who knew Taylor were well aware that he had tried to discourage Mary from the crush that she had on him and no proof was ever brought forward to show that they truly were having a sexual relationship.

But this didn’t stop Mary from dreaming about it. At Taylor’s garish, crowded funeral, Mary approached the director’s casket and kissed his corpse full on the lips. She then caused a stir in the room as she loudly announced that the corpse had spoken to her! “He whispered something to me,” she said, “it sounded like ‘I shall love you always, Mary!’”

This bit of theatrics, along with the scandal itself, helped to destroy her film career.

The coroner’s inquest was held on February 4, 1922 and lasted for less than an hour. Not all of the witnesses on hand were called to testify. The coroner’s jury quickly concluded that the director’s death had been caused by a gunshot wound “by some person or persons unknown to this jury.” To many observers, the murder investigation appeared to be a series of contrivances used to hush up potential scandals. A Chicago Tribune article stated, “Twenty people are said to be under suspicion. Twenty thousand theories of the crime are being aired, but there has not been one arrest and not one clue. It is believed that movie interests would spend a million not to catch the murderer, to prevent the real truth from coming out.” To battle such sentiment, the film studios established a special committee, allegedly to help the press deal with the case, which the studios wanted forgotten as quickly as possible. A few reporters who did not bow to pressure from the special committee claimed to be intimidated by the Los Angeles police.

The case was never officially resolved and as the years passed, bits of truth continued to emerge amidst the stories, rumors, and Hollywood legends. Speculation included the idea that Taylor was murdered by a hired killer who was working for one of the drug dealers servicing Mabel Normand. Friends of Taylor knew that he had appealed to the U.S. Attorney a short time before his death to try and combat the narcotics ring that was selling cocaine to Normand. A dozen known addicts and dealers were questioned and detectives even traveled to Folsom Prison to question two convicts that the warden implicated in Taylor’s murder. One of them said that the other had killed the director at the urging of “a well-known actress” who resented Taylor for interfering with her dope supply. After an exhaustive investigation, detectives became convinced the convicts were lying in hopes of getting transferred to a minimum-security facility.

Another theory surmised that Taylor had been killed by a disgruntled World War I veteran who blamed him for his court-martial, then waited a few years to carry out his revenge. The most popular murder theories have involved Mabel Normand and Mary Miles Minter, one or the other of whom murdered Taylor during a lover’s spat. Another bit of guesswork suggests

the killer was Mary's manipulative mother, who was also a jealous rival for the director's love.

Mabel Norman's career was destroyed by the Taylor scandal, as well as by another incident that occurred shortly afterward involving her chauffeur and the murder of a Hollywood playboy. She made a few additional films but by then, her drug abuse had ruined her health. She died in 1930 from tuberculosis and pneumonia. Mary Miles Minter retired permanently from the screen in 1924. She spent the next few decades feuding with her overbearing mother who finally died, leaving Mary in peace, in 1957. Mary died a recluse in 1984.

Weird stories continued to circulate about the case for years. District Attorney Woolwine, the man who probably knew more about the case than anyone else, resigned due to poor health and died soon after. In 1926, his successor, Asa Keyes, re-opened the Taylor case and announced that an arrest was imminent. Later, Keyes stated that certain vital evidence, kept in a locked cabinet in his office "mysterious vanished" and the case was allowed to lay dormant once more. Keyes later died after going to prison for accepting a bribe in a million dollar oil scandal.

In 1929, the mystery was resurrected again when F.W. Richardson, a former California governor, stated that back in 1926 he had received "positive information" that a "certain top screen actress" had killed Taylor, but he was unable to do anything about it because of the corrupt conditions that existed in L.A. at the time. Richardson implied that the film industry had bribed officials to "bury the investigation." But Richardson's startling announcement led to more dead ends.

In 1943, a man arrested on federal narcotics charges in Indiana offered to name William Desmond Taylor's killer in return for immunity. The government refused to make the deal and the man remained silent and died of pneumonia in the prison hospital.

At that point, any real investigation into the case came to an end. From time to time, writers, reporters, and retired cops will come forward and state that the killer was indeed known to the authorities at the time, but no one could do anything about it. Some have spoken mysteriously of an "actress" or an "actor" who was involved, but no definitive proof has ever been offered. The spectacular William Desmond Taylor case will continue to fascinate for many years to come as a classic Hollywood murder mystery, although it's one that will never be solved in the last pages of the book or in the film's final scenes.

***SIDE NOTE TO THE STORY:***

Early in the investigation, authorities cleared Taylor's valet, Henry Peavey, of any involvement in the slaying. However, a reporter named Florabel Muir was convinced that he was the killer. She believed she could trick Peavey into a confession – and get a great scoop for herself. She enlisted two men, Frank Carson and Al Weinshank, in her plan. Muir went to Peavey and offered him $10 to guide her to the location of Taylor's grave at Hollywood Memorial Park.

Peavey agreed and he rode along with Muir and Frank Carson to the cemetery. They found Taylor's gravesite and got out of the car. As they did, Weinshank, who was covered with a

# How a brave man and 3.25 liters of wine saved a German town



November 12, 2015by lordsofthedrinks



*Rothenburg ob der Tauber*

**When you think of successfully defending a town in 17th century, what comes to mind is brave soldiers in epic battles fighting with guns and bodies till their last breath to ward off the enemy. However, this is not how then-mayor of the German town Rothenburg ob der Tauber saved it. His heroism involved a bet and a 3,25-liter tankard of wine, the legend says.**

On 30 October 1631, the protestant town on the Tauber river surrendered to the emperor's catholic army of 60,000 men. That happened during the Thirty' Years War. The emperor's army was lead by General Count von Tilly, a merciless man who wanted to raze Rothenburg to the ground, because the town offered resistance. He also wanted to sentence to death the mayor and the city council.

Legend says that in an attempt to appease von Tilly, the leaders of the city council offered the General a wonderful 3,25-liter tankard with local wine as a welcome drink. After the fierce man drank a bit, he melted and became amused. His intentions changed. Instead of remorselessly demolishing the city, the General said:


*A bohemian glass from 1616, similar to the tankard of salvation.*

"If one of you has the courage and is in the condition to drink this tankard in one draught, then the lives of the city council members shall be spared and the town shall be protected from annihilation."

Mayor Georg Nusch accepted the formidable challenge. After ten minutes of uninterrupted drinking, the wine was chugged and Rothenbug was saved. Unfortunately, the savior of the town could not enjoy his success right away. It took him three days of blissful oblivion to recover, but he lived to a ripe old age.

According to some sources, Rothenburg was in fact forced to bribe the catholic forces with a huge amount of money and goods.

The inhabitants of Rothenburg still celebrate the salvation of the town by re-creating the event several times a year in the Emperor hall of the City hall. The event is called "Der Meistertrunk", or "The Master

Draught”. Cheers to the warriors who can save an entire city without a single weapon!

Nikolay Nikolov

This entry was posted in Folklore and Mythology, Posts by Nikolay Nikolov and tagged 1631, 30 October, army, battle, catholics, Christianity, chug, conquer, draught, drink, fight, georg, Georg Nusch, German folklore, Germany, glass, legend, master, mayor, meistertrunk, myth, mythology, nusch, protestants, quaff, Rothenburg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, soldier, surrender, tankard, troops, von tilly, war, warrior, wine. Bookmark the permalink.




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# How fear of the undead led to vampire burials of the sick, murdered and those 'born with a sign of the beast'



*Hannah Osborne*

- By Hannah Osborne

October 30, 2015 12:56 GMT



*A female 'vampire' aged between 30 and 39 discovered at Polish burial ground with sickle across her neck Amy Scott*

In medieval and post-medieval Europe, people believed the dead could rise from their graves so they took measures to prevent this from happening. These vampire graves have since been found in countries across Europe, with high-profile cases discovered in Poland, Bulgaria and Italy.

"Vampire" skeletons have been found with bricks lodged into their mouths, forcing open the jaw and preventing them biting future victims. Others have been found with a sickle placed over their necks – decapitating them should they try to rise, while others had their heads removed and placed between their legs.

Tracy K Betsinger, associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at SUNY College at Oneonta, has studied vampire burials in Poland, publishing research on why they were carried out – including how "vampire folklore and the deceased 'vampires'" influenced society at the time, specifically to encourage order, providing an explanation for the unknown and for economic purposes.

She told **IBTimes UK** that while their research focused specifically on Polish vampire burials, they could well translate to many other parts of post-medieval Europe: "Generally, a belief in vampires is based on a similar notion of evil spirits reanimating corpses and then causing problems for the living. The exact details of this belief, of course, varies over time and from culture to culture. The idea of the undead, however, and fear of the dead seems to be held cross-culturally."

In Bulgaria last year, researchers unearthed a 13th-century grave with an iron rod hammered through the skeleton's chest to stop it rising from the dead. The individual – a man in his 40s – had also had his left leg removed and placed beside the rest of the body.

The grave was discovered by Nikolai Ovcharov – an archaeologist dubbed "Bulgaria's



*The vampire grave unearthed in Bulgarian town of Sozopol. The deceased was stabbed in the chest with an iron rod and had his teeth pulled before being buried Nikolay Doychinov/AFP/Getty*

Indiana Jones". He told the Telegraph vampire burials like this were carried out to stop "bad" people from rising from the dead and were often performed on people who had died in unusual circumstances such as suicide: "We have no doubts that once again we're seeing an anti-vampire ritual being carried out," he said at the time. "The ploughshare weighs almost two pounds and is dug into the body into a broken shoulder bone. You can clearly see how the collarbone has literally popped out."

Betsinger, was an author on a PLOS One study about a 17/18th-century burial ground in Drawsko Pomorskie in Poland, where six graves were found with sickles and rocks placed across the bodies. In the study, researchers analysed the skeletons and discovered they were from the local community. Previously, it had been thought many vampire burials were carried out on outsiders not known to the area, therefore more suspicious.

The find suggested one possible reason for the six burials was they were victims of an epidemic – something which the people at the time would have had no understanding of. At the time of their deaths there is historical evidence of a cholera epidemic in Poland, while the plague was also present. Lead author Lesley Gregoricka explained: "These diseases were things people were really afraid of – particularly cholera, which can kill you in a matter of days or hours. They didn't know that it was spread through bacteria in contaminated drinking water. They had no scientific understanding of how infectious disease was spread. Because they couldn't explain it, they contributed cholera to the supernatural – specifically to vampires."

But there were further reasons. Betsinger said: "It is important to realise that there were many potential reasons why someone could have been targeted for an anti-vampiristic burial. Being a non-local is just one of them. While this was not the apparent reason at Drawsko, it is still a possibility for other Polish sites or other sites in Europe.

"There are many alternative reasons why these people received the unusual burial treatment. Cholera outbreaks were in the area at the time, but there is no evidence that these individuals suffered from it nor that the cemetery is an epidemic one.

"There are lots of different behaviours and things that people considered risk factors for becoming a vampire once they died. These include both cultural and biological things. Suicide is definitely one of these. Murder victims and people who drowned are also considered risk factors. Lack of baptism, lack of proper burial rites, born out of wedlock, conceived during a holy period, practising witchcraft ... these are all culturally-based risk factors.



*A female aged between 40 and 49 with a rock placed beneath her chin and teeth removed to prevent her rising from the dead Gregoricka et al.*

"Having a disfigurement, being born with a sign of the 'beast' (born with teeth, born with a vestigial tail, born with hair down the back), first to die in a disease outbreak... these are both biocultural risk factors. So, some of these factors are things that were undone, while others are things that were done, even though it may have not been the fault of the individual."

Gregoricka said she is currently analysing enamel samples from the six graves found in Drawsko to find out more about mobility and migration in the past: "This will provide additional lines of evidence for whether those individuals interred as potential vampires were local or non-local to the region."

Vampire burials continued through the 1800s. In the 1990s, archaeologists discovered the 19th-century grave of an adult male whose body had been staked into the ground, National Geographic reported. The skeleton, on the Greek island of Lesbos, had several eight inch iron spikes driven through his neck, pelvis and ankle.



*This female from a 16th-century grave in Venice had a brick rammed into her jaw to stop her rising from the dead and attacking the living Reuters*

Indeed, vampire graves have also been found in the US. Researchers in Connecticut came across an 18/19th- century grave of a man in his 50s whose head and upper leg bones had been placed in a skull and crossbone pattern. Examination revealed he had been suffering from tuberculosis, which would have caused him go pale and lose weight.

"The New England folk belief in vampires revolves around the ability of a deceased tuberculosis victim to return from the dead as a vampire and cause the 'wasting away' of the surviving relatives," archaeologists wrote in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology. "To stop the actions of the vampire, the body of the consumptive was exhumed and disrupted in various ways. Twelve historic accounts of this activity indicate that the belief was not uncommon in 19th-century New England."

And belief in vampires still persists today. A recent study by Idaho State University interviewed people who identify themselves as vampires. While it is not known how many people worldwide do see themselves as vampires, the researchers found those who do hide their identities for fear of being judged by doctors for their lifestyles.

"While the particular practice of burying people to prevent vampirism may no longer be common, beliefs in the undead/vampires have persisted, both in popular media, but also in more culturally-based beliefs," Betsinger said. "For instance, there are some people today who believe they are vampires... some are considered psychic vampires, who feed off the

energy of others, while others are sanguine and believe they need to consume blood (not necessarily human) to survive.

"Popular media has certainly changed the image of the vampire. Post-medieval Polish vampires were not young, sexy, and desirable. They were scary, evil spirits that reanimated the dead and caused great harm to the living. There has been quite a shift in the perception of this very common folklore."

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Discovery is alienating the very people who supply its content: scientists

- By Arielle Duhaime-Ross
- on August 13, 2014 01:33 pm



( Hillary / Flickr ) ( Hillary / Flickr )

*This post was originally published last year. With this year's Shark Week programming beginning tonight, we thought this would be a good reminder of some of Discovery's more unpleasant tendencies.*

Discovery's Shark Week reached an important milestone this week: it hit an all-time ratings high, which the network partially attributes to an increase in female viewership. But instead of receiving acclaim, Discovery is getting pummeled by the media. A sample of recent headlines include "Shark Week is once again making things up," "Shark Week isn't just misguided, it's downright dangerous," and "More Sharknado than Science." Of course, this isn't the first time Shark Week has experienced backlash for its negative portrayal of sharks and its tendency to rely on fiction rather than fact, as last year's Megalodon documentary was widely trashed for suggesting that extinct sharks still roam Earth's waters.

But this year feels different, perhaps because a number of shark scientists have begun to explain why they refuse to work with Discovery — and how Shark Week burned them in the past.

**The Shark Week burn**

Jonathan Davis' story is a prime example. His research was featured on Shark Week last year as part of a show called *Voodoo Shark*, which explored the existence of the "Rooken" — a fictional shark monster that dwells in the Louisiana Bayous. But, as *io9* reported on Monday, Davis didn't know that the producers were going to use his work to perpetuate a myth. In fact, he says, it wasn't until his two-and-a-half hour interview with producers ended that he was asked, as an afterthought, what he thought of the voodoo shark.

""They portrayed it as though I believe in the Voodoo shark and that my research focused on searching for it.""

"The interviewer said, 'What do you think of this monster shark called the Rooken in South Louisiana,' and my answer was 'That's complete BS, there's no such thing, I've never heard of it, but if I had I would know that it wasn't true,'" Davis explains. Then, the producer asked

Davis about the existence of large bull sharks. He said that there could absolutely be large sharks in the area, even right behind them. It wasn't until months later that he found out what had become of this answer.

"They chopped up the second question, and superimposed my second answer to the first question," he says. "They showed a Southern hillbilly fisherman talking about the voodoo shark, and then they pan to me, saying, 'Shark scientist Jonathan Davis believes that if the voodoo shark is here, it will be in the lake bayous.'"

Outraged, Davis tried to get in touch with Discovery, but they never answered his emails. "They portrayed it as though I believed in the Voodoo shark and that my research focused on searching for it — the overall outlook of the show was terrible."

*The Verge* contacted Discovery to verify Davis' story, but the network declined to address his assertions directly, stating instead:

> For 27 years Shark Week has been the prime showcase for all things shark – science, legend and conservation concerns. A whole generation that has grown up with shark week have awareness and issues for sharks; many marine biologists cite Shark Week as bringing them into that field. *Discovery Channel* has been one of the biggest contributors to furthering shark research and have paid for technology that has been critical in the studies.

The production company that worked with Davis also got back to us, but they were equally vague:

> It's our goal at Gurney Productions to work closely with marine experts and scientists worldwide. We strive to create awareness for the entire shark species. The more viewers we can bring to TV through Shark Week the more potential donations that will come to the table to help study and preserve these awesome creatures and fight the real problem — commercial shark fishing and finning.

One might have expected to see less myth and more reality in this year's shows. Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be the case, because as one zoologist explained in a blog post for *Southern Fried Science*, the documentary that explored the existence of the "Shark Submarine" on Sunday night is actually the product of a fictional story created by journalists in the 1970s. These journalists, Michelle Wcisel explains, wanted to demonstrate how easy it was to fool readers, so they made up a story about a large white shark in South Africa's False Bay. Seeing the myth propagated onscreen in 2014, she writes, "literally broke my heart to watch." And so shark experts are speaking out.

"A number of years ago, I was in a project in which the focus was on the USS Indianapolis, the US cruiser that went down at the end of WWII," says George Burgess, director of the Florida Program for Shark Research at the Florida Museum of Natural History who has participated in Shark Week numerous times. Survivors of the wreckage were involved with sharks afterwards, he explains, so Discovery brought him in to speak to some of them. "It was a hugely moving testimony from these guys and the film crew from the UK did a marvelous

job from making a docu-drama out of it," he says. But when Discovery saw the finished product, they changed the name of the special to "Ocean of Fear" (Burgess doesn't recall the original title, which he says was far less provocative), and asked for changes.

""They made the film crew go back and insert more scared-to-death guys in the water.""

"They made the film crew go back and insert more scared-to-death guys in the water, and injected it throughout the film to make it more scary," he says. But even after that show aired, Burgess continued to believe that Discovery could turn things around — until the Megalodon special aired last year.

"[Megalodon] was probably the final nail in the coffin as far as I was concerned," he says. "I defended their programming, but it's hard for me to do that now after such an overtly bad show that was put out for titillating purposes only, and clearly had no factual basis."

This year, Kristine Stump, a research associate at Shedd Aquarium, counts herself among those who have spoken out against Discovery's practices. "The basic premise was a camera crew was dropping in on real scientists doing actual hammerhead research," Stump told *io9* about a special that aired Tuesday night. Instead, her work was featured on a special called *Monster Hammerhead* — one that Discovery says documents how "a team of scientists and anglers look to explore the mystery and find out if the legend could be real." Predictably, Stump said that the description "does not match the description of what we filmed."

Despite the mounting criticism, Discovery still has supporters among members of the shark community. Eli Martinez, publisher and editor of *Shark Diver Magazine*, has worked with Discovery on multiple occasions, including this year. "What I specialize in is interacting and working with sharks," he says. "They didn't ask me to do anything that I didn't want to do."

""They didn't ask me to do anything that I didn't want to do.""

In fact, he says, the only pressure he feels comes from the shark community itself. "They are calling me a sellout," he says, for participating in a special this year called *Zombie Sharks* (the name Discovery chose to represent tonic immobility — a phenomenon in which some sharks fall into a trance-like state when their noses are rubbed or when they're held belly-up). "People don't know what the show is about and just from the name alone, I've gotten some heat."

Moreover, he says, throwing Discovery under the bus for something that most nature and science channels do every day isn't entirely fair. "I remember sitting in a meeting at *National Geographic* and we started talking about bringing in the science and conservation people [for a show]." But the minute Martinez's team brought science up, they were told that *National Geographic* wanted to downplay that part as much as they could. "They said, if I want to do this show, we need less science, and more of the excitement, fear, and fun of the animal."

**What does this mean for Shark Week?**

As ratings continue to soar, it's unlikely that Discovery will change its strategy. And given the current expert exodus away from Discovery's programming, Shark Week might soon be a place that only gives voice to charlatans. "If they don't start adjusting their programming at a real-world level they will have less and less experts and substituting with more pseudo-experts," Burgess says. "It's kind of sad because the audience is already guaranteed and they are choosing this route."

Todd Cameron, an activist who recently swam 1,429 miles to raise awareness about the dire ecological situation sharks are facing, is one of the casualties of Discovery's poor business practices. He, too, was approached by Discovery to participate in one of its shows, but turned the opportunity down. He took to Facebook in July to explain his decision:



*Todd Cameron Facebook - shark week*

Cameron told *The Verge* that Shark Week is "very juvenile," adding that "sharks are such a crucial species and 100 million are killed each year, you would think that Shark Week would be doing something educational." He also takes issue with the way sharks are shown approaching researchers' boats. "You need to bait blue sharks for three hours just to see one," he says. "If you don't do that they have no reason to come up to the boat — that's the reality of shark diving." But Discovery rarely tells viewers this, he says, and they often omit vital pieces of information, like the fact that many species depicted in the shows never come near humans. "They are taking an extremely skittish, docile, and shy animal like a tiger shark or a hammerhead shark and they are tuning it into a monster."

"Researchers "don't want to be part of the hate.""

Samantha Sherman, a marine biologist at James Cook University, says that Shark Week was "the best week of the year" growing up, but it has taken a distinct turn toward pseudoscience. As a result, she says, her colleagues have been less than forthcoming when producers have called them and asked for help. "I have a couple friends that have been approached by Discovery and have turned it down because of where it's going and the fear-mongering," she says. "They don't want to be part of the hate, or have their message misinterpreted so they have just said 'no.'"

"There is a distinct lack of well-published and highly-regarded shark scientists involved in the programming," said Christine Dudgeon, a leopard shark ecologist at the University of Queensland in Australia, in an email to *The Verge*. Instead of focusing on the science, she says, they show shark attacks — which, for the record, are still rare, despite a recent increase (between 2006 and 2010, an average of 4.2 fatal shark attacks occurred each year).

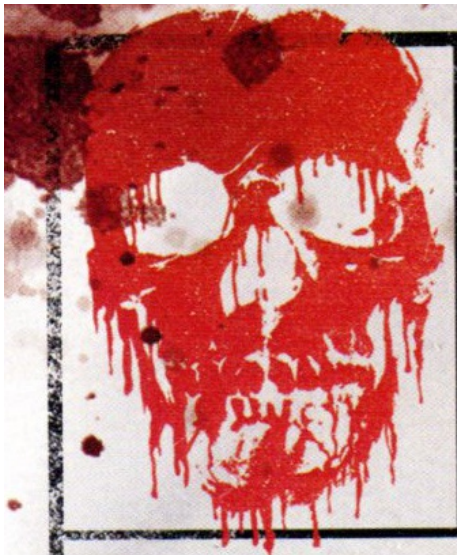
This begs the question: could Discovery maintain its current success without relying on

sensationalism? According to Sherman, there's more than enough exciting shark science to fuel such an endeavor. "There are so many other sharks out there — sharks that can do things that most people wouldn't believe, like glow blue." With over 400 species of sharks in existence, she says, it's unfortunate that Shark Week often only profiles three or four.

But content is only one side of the coin: viewers have to tune in, too. A change in Discovery's strategy would probably be welcomed by experts, but would likely mean a drop in ratings over time. "The TV world isn't putting anything out there that the audience isn't asking for," Martinez says. "I mean look at Sharknado! It's horrible, but the audience loved it enough to make a second one."

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# CORONER'S REPORT

## WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

CASE NO. 161

*Ichi the Killer* and *Audition* director Takashi Miike cites Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* as his favourite horror movie.

A Kentucky man was recently caught digging up the 30-year-old grave of his father while shouting Bible verses. He allegedly told the police constable who confronted him that he was exhuming his dad so he could go to heaven.

In *Clive Barker's A to Z of Horror*, Tom Savini cites Lon Chaney, Sr. as his earliest influence, after seeing 1957's *Man of a Thousand Faces* when he was thirteen years old.

A nineteen-year-old Houston man died this summer after the gun he was taking selfies with accidentally went off, shooting him in the throat.

In the commentary track for *Shocker*, Wes Craven reveals that the two biggest influences on the film are *The Hidden* (1987) and John Carpenter's *The Thing*.

After a vicious storm tore through the Irish town of Collooney, residents found a skeleton tangled in the roots of a 200-year-old fallen tree. The bones are approximately 1000 years old and indicate the man met a violent demise.

Earlier this year, paranormal investigator Zak Bagans purchased pathologist/assisted suicide advocate Jack Kevorkian's 1968 Volkswagon van around $30,000 USD. It's believed Kevorkian helped people die in the vehicle via his "homemade suicide machine."

A North Carolina man was arrested this summer after attacking a woman with an axe while outfitted in a clown mask and multi-coloured wig.

To prepare for his voice role of Billy, the prank-calling killer in *Black Christmas*, Nick Mancuso stood on his head in order to compress his thorax to get the right sound for the murderer's voice.

A 36-year-old Maine man has been arrested for spray-painting pictures of Bigfoot on a number of buildings in and around Kennebunk Beach.

Fritz Lang's 1931 film *M* was allegedly based on real-life serial killer Peter Kürten, who was known as the "Vampire of Düsseldorf" after he confessed to drinking his victims' blood. Lang denied the connection, but several countries still released the movie as *The Vampire of Dusseldorf*.

*A Nightmare on Elm Street* star Heather Langenkamp and her husband, David LeRoy Anderon, own AFX Studio, which has done effects for the *Dawn of the Dead* remake, *The Cabin in the Woods* and the new TV show *Scream Queens*.

Last year, a 47-year-old cleaner became literal minced meat when he fell into a meat mincing machine at a plant in Paderborn, Germany.

# MONSTRO BIZARRO

In his new book, *Chupacabra Road Trip*, author Nick Redfern not only details his searches for the elusive goat-sucker in Puerto Rico, The United States and Mexico, but also sheds light on lesser known reports from Russia. As in the Latin variety, the cases involve livestock turning up dead, allegedly drained of blood. Russian news site *Pravda* reported a 2005 incident where sheep in the village of Gavrilovka "fell victim to the night-time vampire." The unidentified killer also hit the hamlets of Vozdvizhenka and Shishma, racking up a death toll of more than 30 cattle. An eyewitness claimed: "It looked like an enormous dog that had stood up on its hind legs. And jumped like a kangaroo." In 2011, *Moscow News* reported: "A blood-sucking creature is preying upon goats near Novosibirsk. Horrified farmers and smallholders are confronted by the drained corpses of their livestock in the morning, bloodless and bearing puncture marks to the neck."

**LYLE BLACKBURN**

MORE MONSTRO BIZARRO AT RUE-MORGUE.COM

# CLASSIC CUT

## STRUWWELPETER

### DR. HEINRICH HOFFMAN ☠ GERMANY – 1845

Peruse the children's section of any well-stocked bookstore today and you'll discover a slew of genre tales involving vampires, wizards and mythological creatures. Still, you'd have to step back well over a century to come across the likes of Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwwelpeter* ("Shockhead Peter"), a series of verses so grisly and grotesque, it's hard to believe they were written for children.




Pronounced *Strool'vel-pay-ter,* the ten stories comprising the anthology involve no less than a girl who plays with matches and gets burned to death, a thumb-sucking boy who has his offending digits chopped off by a tailor, and Shockhead Peter himself, a freakish boy who does not cut his hair or nails – and who would seem a direct template for Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (despite the director's insistence to the contrary).

You'd be hard-pressed to get a parental endorsement for this tome of terror today. And yet, Hoffman's book is one of the most widely published children's books in Germany, right up there with the Brothers Grimm.

Its origins are truly D.I.Y. Hoffman was an MD living in Frankfurt. Come Christmas 1844, he was searching bookshops for a present for his three-year-old son but found most children's books to be either boring or too instructive, lacking an engaging hook. So he decided to make his own, writing a few stories in verse and sketching out some illustrations.

Friends saw Hoffmann's work and were impressed. Bolstered by the encouragement, he published the stories under the pseudonym Reimerich Kinderlieb. Selling out 1500 copies in four weeks, he added more stories and pushed the *Struwwelpeter* tale to the front of the book (which adopted the infamous image as its cover). A publishing phenomenon was born.

In its wake, other cautionary tales that fused humour and horror, such as Hilare Belloc's *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts* (1896), were published. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Lewis Carroll even references *Struwwelpeter* and its ilk, noting that Alice "had read several nice little histories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts and other unpleasant things."

*Struwwelpeter* was also one of the first children's books to balance text and image, setting the style for modern kids' titles. Maurice Sendak, celebrated author/illustrator of *Where the Wild Things Are,* praised the book's revolutionary look, noting that "graphically...[*Struwwelpeter* is] one of the most beautiful books in the world."



Today, Hoffmann's drawings remain surprisingly lurid – there's spurting blood coming from the thumb-sucker's severed digits, while Harriet, the girl who played with matches, is seen engulfed in flames.

It's telling that the public was (and still is) drawn to such vivid depictions of pain and death, particularly when filtered through comedic verse. Through graphic hyperbole, it reinforces that misbehaviour comes with dire consequences. *Struwwelpeter*'s iconic imagery and its humorously macabre bent would later inform the works of Edward Gorey (*The Gashlycrumb Tinies*) and permeate the writings of Lemony Snicket and Roald Dahl. In particular, Dahl's classic *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* owes a debt to *Struwwelpeter*, as the lucky guests to Wonka's factory meet grim ends after failing to heed the candy maker's warnings.

Now 170 years old, the book has been published in 35 different languages and in several hundred German editions alone. Mark Twain himself penned an English translation, called *Slovenly Peter,* in 1935. In 1998, the book was translated into a successful off-Broadway musical that also hit London's West End. And, in a 2006 episode of the sitcom *The Office*, Dwight Shrute is seen reading the "Tale of the Thumb-Sucker" to a group of young children, as his boss is horrified.

Scholar and Grimm translator Jack Zipes noted that at the time of its publication "no other book of its kind unleashed a series of imitations that celebrated corporal punishment in the way it did. In numerous picture books that followed and imitated *Struwwelpeter*, children are brutally beaten, thrown into dark cellars and dungeons." Though the book's original intent to help socialize the middle class may be lost on readers today, *Struwwelpeter*'s unique fusion of humour and horror for such a young readership remains a benchmark of children's genre literature.

JEFF SZPIRGLAS







**Infant in southern Indian city of Chennai bursts into flames four times over three months**

- BySanskrity Sinha

August 10, 2013 07:05 BST



*Afghan children watch burning expired medical items and food on the outskirts of Jalalabad, March 4, 2013. An Indian baby has been virtually in flames four times since his birth in May 2013 due to a rare condition called Spontaneous Human Combustion (Photo: REUTERS / Parwiz).*

A three-month-old Indian baby has been repeatedly catching fire because of a rare medical condition known as Spontaneous Human Combustion (SHC).

Named Rahul, the baby boy first caught fire when he was nine days old. His mother, Rajeshwari, rushed him to hospital in disbelief, after watching her son burst into flames without any source of combustion in the vicinity.

The baby has caught fire four times since birth and is receiving treatment for burn injuries at the Kilpauk Medical College (KMC) Hospital in the southern city of Chennai. He was admitted to the hospital with the most recent burn injuries on 8 August.

Doctors say Rahul's condition could be the result of combustible gases emitted from the skin's pores.

"The body burns spontaneously due to combustible gases emitting from the patient's body, without any external source of ignition. Clothes and other things nearby that are inflammable may also catch fire," Dr R Narayana Babu, head of the paediatrics department at KMC, explained.

There is no complete explanation for SHC but some 200 such cases have been reported over the last three centuries. There is not cure, except continuous treatment for the burns, according to Dr Jayaraman, the former head of the burns unit at KMC.

"20 years ago, we saw a similar case - of a 23-year-old man - but it went undocumented. Several theories of SHC do the rounds but they are vague and not backed by scientific proof. There is no special cure... it can be treated like a regular burn injury," he told The Times of India.

For now, doctors say they can only ensure the baby stays away from inflammable substances

such as matchsticks, silks, kerosene oil, etc, and also stays in controlled temperatures.

"An episode may or may not recur. It's like any other burn injury, with the likelihood of scars and secondary infections. Plastic surgery is also expected," Dr Babu concluded.


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# Families of Tana Toraja in Indonesia dress up dead loved ones in bizarre village tradition

October 31, 2015 8:53am



*The families in Toraja in South Sulawesi believe in welcoming the spirit of a dead person back to the village of his origin. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*

**WHILE the mere sight of a corpse can frighten most of us, one community in Indonesia loves their dead so much they exhume corpses to mark their respect.**

The families in Toraja in South Sulawesi believe in welcoming the spirit of a dead person back to the village of his or her origin.

And as a popular belief, they dig up the graves of their deceased loved ones, wash them, groom them and dress them up in fancy new clothes before walking them around in the village once every three years.

They call the bizarre ritual of dolling up mummies Ma'nen or 'The Ceremony of Cleaning Corpses' and practice it to honour the spirits of their ancestors.



*A local tidying up one of his relatives hair. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*

They also repair or fix broken and damaged coffins.

From babies to penioners, corpses are exhumed by the families and given proper baths, grooming session and new clothes. They are then walked in straight lines around the village and buried again.

**Indonesia's real life walking dead (Warning: Graphic content)**



*Bone remains dresed up with some sunglasses. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*Two of the locals dressing up their relative. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*A dead relative dressed up. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*A local tidying up one of his relatives hair. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*Bone remains dressed up. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*A dressed up dead relative laid to rest in a coffin. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*Two dressed up relatives. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*Locals getting their relatives ready to walk around the village. Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*



*Locals getting their relatives ready to walk around the village.*
*Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*




*Locals lowering their dressed up dead relative into a coffin.*
*Picture: Caters News/Picture Media*

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# Inside the human blood-drinking, ‘real vampire’ community of New Orleans

*By Yanan Wang*
*October 26*

washingtonpost.com

**Inside the human blood-drinking, ‘real vampire’ community of New Orleans**



*(iStock)*

John Edgar Browning met his first “real vampire” in a Gothic apparel store.

A doctoral candidate at Louisiana State University at the time, Browning had already been on the hunt for several months. He was talking to the store owner of Wicked Orleans, a Gothic-style clothing and leather shop in New Orleans’s French Quarter, when a middle-aged woman and two teenage boys walked through the door.

The store owner stopped mid-sentence. This woman, he motioned, was one of the people Browning was looking for.

Nervously, Browning approached her and started talking to her about his ethnographic study of “real vampires.” To be clear, these aren’t people who possess the supernatural powers that we associate with the likes of Count Dracula, but rather individuals who claim to have a medical condition that requires them to drink blood (human or animal) in order to sustain themselves.

Members of this community have chosen to identify themselves as “vampires” in defiance of the negative images that the label evokes. Did she know anyone who fit that description?

The woman smiled, and Browning had his answer — her open lips revealed teeth that had been filed to a point, like fangs.

“I call it my ‘first time,’ ” Browning told The Washington Post of the inaugural encounter. Though the woman never did give him a call as promised, Browning soon found himself in the company of vampires again at a nightclub. Then, several weeks following that, he met an “elder vampire” who invited him to attend meetings of the New Orleans Vampire Association (NOVA).

Browning, who has spent his entire academic life studying the depiction of vampires in film and literature, originally thought that there must be something deranged about real people who identify with the characters that seem more suited to horror movies than a historic district in Louisiana.

Pervasive vampire lore, from the ancient tale of Count Dracula to the modern romance of "Twilight," has assured that any mention of the mythical beings conjures images of bloodthirsty villains deeply rooted in the supernatural.

"Until 2009, the only area of vampire studies that I hadn't approached was real vampires," said Browning, who is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Georgia Institute of Technology. "I think I subconsciously saved it for last because I just thought what a lot of people think: that they must be crazy and have read too much fictional work about vampires."

His skepticism waned soon after he embarked on a class project that would turn into five years of field study among the real vampires of the French Quarter.

Surveys conducted by the Atlanta Vampire Alliance have found that there are at least 5,000 people in the United States who identify as real vampires. Browning said there are about 50 living in New Orleans alone — a figure that he guessed is common for most major cities and corroborated by sociologist DJ Williams to the BBC.

These communities have largely kept to themselves, knowing enough about public perception to not want to attract prying eyes. Browning, aware of the visceral disgust that his research is likely to provoke, seldom brings it up in everyday conversation. But his own initial belief that there was something wrong with these people faded after he started getting to know them.

"After a short period of time," he said, "I realized that they weren't crazy. At least, they weren't any crazier than your Average Joe."

According to Browning, symptoms of vampirism start to manifest around puberty, when those who later become reliant on ingesting blood find themselves physically "drained" for no discernible reason. They usually discover accidentally that blood offers a remedy: They might bite their lip, for instance, and realize that swallowing the metallic liquid between their teeth gives them an instant burst of energy.

Not every vampire must drink blood to survive (those who do are called "sanguinarians"). Some simply derive strength from taking the "psychic energy" of others. This can be accomplished through intimate human touch, like giving someone a massage.

The community has adopted terms to describe their unorthodox habits. To "feed" is to drink blood, while those who give their blood are called "donors." Being "awakened" and "coming out of the coffin" are ways to talk about becoming aware of one's vampiric identity. "Elder vampires," then, are those who have been awakened for some time and can in turn advise others on how to cope.

One year into his study, Browning decided to try being a donor himself. During one of NOVA's holiday charity events, where members of the vampire community come together to make food for the homeless, he met with one vampire who left the turkey he was cooking to feed.

"Each of them have a particular method," Browning said. This person used a disposable

scalpel to make a tiny prick on Browning's back, then used his fingers to squeeze the area until blood came out. He put his mouth directly over the warm liquid and lapped it up, repeating the process two or three times before cleaning Browning's wound.

Browning said only the pricking hurt, but mostly because he's a "needle-phobe."

Someone might become a donor for a number of reasons, from being a close friend of the vampire's to doing it for financial compensation and sometimes even sexual favors. Vampires approach these potential donors after having observed them for some time, and only if they're fairly certain they're the kind of people who won't "freak out."



*Members of the New Orleans real vampire community hand out food to the homeless on Easter in 2013. ( New Orleans Vampire Association )*

The vampires whom Browning spoke with claim they can't control their urges, which amount to a need for around two or three feedings a week. If ample blood is on offer, they might refrigerate it and later combine it with other ingredients, like tea.

Kinesia, a woman who identifies as a blood drinker, told the BBC that she isn't a vampire by choice. "Many of us would rather not go through the cyclic symptoms and just be happy to live life like a normal person," she said.

A real vampire in Britain, Alexia, echoed the sentiment: "If the cause could be identified, I would most certainly take a pharmaceutical pill."

Most vampires have kept their condition from their doctors because they are wary of stigma. But those who are known to have disclosed their habits haven't been given a medical explanation.

"This could very well be in our heads," a vampire who calls herself "CJ!" admitted to the BBC. Yet, those vampires who have tried to stop drinking blood have met scary consequences.

When Kinesia went four months without feeding, she found herself in the emergency room with a low heart rate that would shoot up to 160 when she stood up or walked around. This would be followed by a massive migraine, and sometimes a loss of consciousness.

Browning said he knows of a woman who found herself unable to go to work or even walk after a period of not ingesting blood. When her husband came to see her in the hospital, she fed from him in her room and immediately felt better.

Tomas Ganz, a medical doctor and professor at UCLA, told the BBC that the "cure" offered by blood in these cases may very well be psychological.

“There is likely a strong placebo effect, akin to ingesting bitter powders, brightly colored liquids or other substances that do not look or taste like conventional foods,” he said. “This effect can be further enhanced if there is a ritual component associated with the ingestion, and if the individual feels a sense of some kind of exclusivity (such as drinking a very expensive and rare wine).”

Though the habits of modern vampires may seem frightening to most, Browning insisted that the ones he met in New Orleans were incredibly friendly.

“After a while, I felt more comfortable being at a NOVA meeting than I would be sitting in a coffee shop,” he said. “That’s just how non-abnormal they came across. Being marginalized, they’re more in tune with their self-identity and much more aware of the world around them.”

A gay man, Browning said he’s been able to sympathize with and believe that the vampires’ condition is real even though there seems to be no scientific explanation.

“None of the people I interviewed gave me any reason not to believe what they’re saying,” Browning said. “Being a gay man myself, it’s not like people can take my blood and see that I’m gay, but that doesn’t mean it’s not real.”

He found the vampire community in the French Quarter to be predominantly Caucasian and to a lesser extent Latino. They ranged in age from 18 to 50, identified with a range of sexualities and religions and were split almost evenly between men and women.

Williams, a sociologist at Idaho State University, has conducted research on how vampire stigma has affected the quality of the individuals’ health care. In his studies, Williams has found no evidence of psychiatric issues in self-identified vampires.

For Browning’s part, he believes that making people more informed about the real vampires in their midst will encourage important conversations about how normalcy is defined by the mainstream.

“I think what the [vampires] are doing is good, because it helps put into perspective what our conception of ‘normal’ is,” Browning said. “Them doing what they’re doing isn’t a problem. … It’s our preconceived notion of what normal is that’s the problem.”

Over his five years of study, Browning found that most of the vampires were otherwise normal in the eyes of society. They had spouses, friends and jobs; many of them had children from whom they hid their practice. While some have taken to wearing Gothic attire and prosthetic fangs, others have no physical markers to indicate their vampirism.

When Browning started his research, he was most surprised to discover that most of the community members didn’t have an extensive knowledge of how vampires are portrayed in popular culture. Once, when he mentioned an episode of “True Blood,” he said, “no one knew what I was talking about.”

This lack of awareness indicated to him that the vampires weren’t super-fans who had simply taken their obsession with fantasy narratives to an extreme. Rather, they were normal people

with routines no different from everyone else.

No different, that is, with the exception of one grisly drinking habit.

62 Comments
warfire911
11/1/2015 7:17 AM PST
I assumed most people calling themselves vampires were being edgy to garner relevance.
...more
See More
Joe Pierre
10/29/2015 8:23 AM PDT
a psychiatrist's take on vampires:

https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/psych-unseen/.....more
See More
TopSecretWriters
10/29/2015 7:58 AM PDT
Oh my...Washington Post must be desperate for traffic to focus on a keyword Google search term like "real vampire"! That one is an oldie. You may want to hire a new SEO person....more
See More
peritaxi
10/27/2015 1:44 PM PDT [Edited]
Most historical religious prohibitions can be traced to pre-science eras before we understood micro-pathogens. Laws forbidding pork track easily to the high number of parasites and diseases pigs carry; only proper cooking makes pork safe. Without that knowledge, safety comes from religious edict.

So too has the case been offered of fearing male homosexual behavior. Without understanding some viruses and diseases could be transferred among the ignorant, easy to say "God says bad". And so it goes, from shellfish down the line, there are all manner of potent diseases that without an understanding of the transmission process, the only fast and easy solution is to make it a religious taboo.

We now can identify many specific diseases from spongiform encephalopathy or Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease to many specific ailments which attack the body if introduced directly from raw foods from other animals which have not been cooked or irradiated to kill specific pathogens.

The bacteria in raw milk is estimated to have killed tens of thousands over the years from microorganisms E.Colli, Salmonella, Listeria and other bacteria until Louis Pasteur identified that there were living small dangers that were the source of illness and death in raw foods.

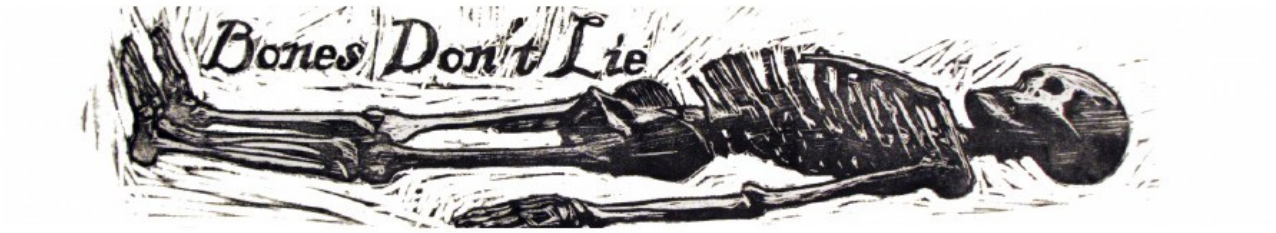
And now we have the ingestion of raw human and other blood as a fad?

One perhaps apocryphal quote from King Henry 8th offers a warning: The greatest redeeming quality of the stupid is their short life.

Here's hoping this doesn't end that way, but if history is any teacher.....more
See More
Celestina
10/27/2015 8:09 AM PDT
Ew, friggin disgusting! Seems so unsanitary. ...more
See More
Keln
10/27/2015 7:55 AM PDT
This sounds like a form of Pica to me, a psychological disorder which makes a person feel the need to eat a specific substance that isn't food. I'd call it a form of Hemophagia, but psychological, not physiological as in certain bat species or leeches. The biggest indicator of it being psychological is that so many of these people find out that tasting blood makes them feel better when they ingest their own such as from biting their own lip. Since it is their own blood, it is the taste that is the psychological trigger, and not any substance within blood that they were lacking....more
See More
peritaxi and djoyg2
petefunker
10/27/2015 7:24 AM PDT
Remember that vampire movie where the vampires go around begging the community for blood donations? Me neither! These "real" vampire people are soooo dumb. Good thing the movie "Twilight" wasnt about oompa loompas or there would be a run on tanning lamps and white overalls. What a bunch of non-creative, followers. Oh, that probably exactly the kind of reaction you are looking for though to prove that you are so ostracized and dont fit in anywhere -- I get it -- nothing in this life feels right but the darkness, right? Wrong, it is just that you are not liked. Conform with your herd, nerds, conform with your herd. ...more
See More
djoyg1
Nick Moore
10/28/2015 3:16 AM PDT
A group of sheep is called a "herd".

And sheep are the dumbest creatures of all. Mind your words, food. -- Sincerely, a wolf who does not concern himself with your needs....more
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October 28, 2015 · by Katy Meyers Emery · in Overviews. ·

*[This article is being co-written by myself, Katy Meyers Emery, and Lisa Bright, a graduate student at MSU in the mortuary archaeology program.]*

In 2015, Mitchel Townsend was featured in an article that announced that they had found archaeological evidence of Bigfoot, the mysterious ape-man said to wander the woods in the Northwest of North America. The article "Proof of Bigfoot is in the bones, college instructor says" reported that Townsend had found stacked bones in the woods with evidence of large human bite marks, and that this was evidence for the existence of Sasquatch. At the end of the article, Townsend challenges scientists to refute their findings that the chewed bones they found are evidence for Bigfoot's existence.

Challenge Accepted! Luckily for me, I have the wonderfully brilliant Lisa Bright as a colleague at MSU, and her research on taphonomy is cited in the Mills, Mills and Townsend study (not yet published). Today, I'll be sharing the background and possible interpretations of what the bioarchaeology and archaeology of Bigfoot would be if there was evidence, and tomorrow Lisa will share her research and discuss the issues with the Mills et al. [Forthcoming] studies. To preface this- Bigfoot is a combination of myth and hoax, not reality. This is a fun Halloween post, not something to be taken seriously. Enjoy!

**Background**

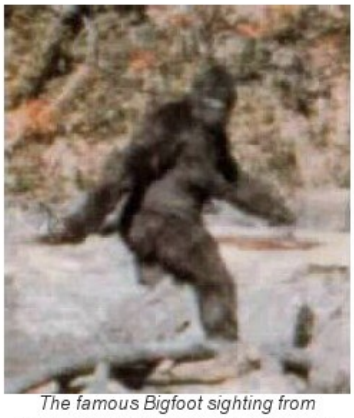



*Sign on Pikes Peak Highway, via Wikimedia*

First, let's get some background and history on the big hairy guy. Bigfoot, also known as Sasquatch or Samsquanch if you're a Trailer Park Boys fan, is a crytid simian or ape-hominid creature that is said to inhabit the forests and woods in the Pacific Northwest region of the USA and Canada. Many native groups in this region have stories of wild or ape-like men, varying slightly by region and culture. The folklore ranges from stories about nefarious human-like beasts that will carry away children, to more benign creatures who hide in the woods and avoid the modern world. The first major compilation of stories about Bigfoot appeared in the 1920s, a collection of local tales by J. W. Burns. Burns' articles took different native stories describing similar man-like beasts and argued that they were all evidence of a single entity, which popularized the name of Sasquatch.

Records of Bigfoot sightings by non-natives in the USA begin around the 1850s, with records of hunters being felled by beasts who walked on two legs. Other stories from the 19th century include the "Wild Man of Crow Canyon" and "The Winsted Wildman" both reporting large hairy creatures that looked like men but were not human. In 1924, a prospector in Vancouver reported that he had been kidnapped by Sasquatch, and miners in Washington state reported that they were attacked by wildmen.

The most famous sightings of the creature have been in the past half century or so. One of the most famous is the discovery of large barefoot prints found around a construction site in California in 1958. A construction worker took plaster casts of the footprints, and the event popularized the name 'Bigfoot' as a psuedonym for the beast. Years later, it was revealed that the foot prints were a hoax- the large feet were created by Ray Wallace, the brother of the construction crew's overseer. Wallace's nephew and other relatives shared the story and the pair of 16 inch wooden feet that were used to create the prints. Probably the best known evidence for Bigfoot is the Patterson-Grimlin video taken in 1967 by Roger Patterson and Robert Gimlin in California, which documents a large creature taking long strides through the forest. Patternson and Grimlin had the video examined by experts from the special effects department at Universal Studios in Hollywood, who argued that "We could try (faking it), but we would have to



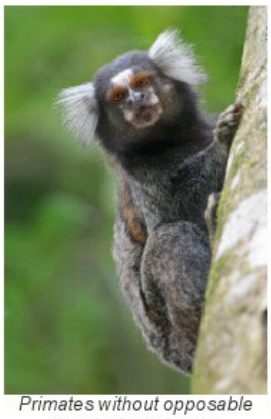
*The famous Bigfoot sighting from "Patterson–Gimlin film frame 352" by Patterson-Gimlin film. Via Wikipedia*

create a completely new system of artificial muscles and find an actor who could be trained to walk like that. It might be done, but we would have to say that it would be almost impossible." However, in 1999, Bob Heironimus, a friend of Patterson's, said that he had worn the ape costume for the making of the film, and that the whole thing was a hoax.

Most scientists discount the existence of Bigfoot, considering it as a combination of folklore, misidentification and hoax. There is very little physical evidence for the creature and large numbers of the beast would be required to maintain the population (Despite this, a few researchers have focused their scientific work on the creature: see see the work of Grover Krantz, Jeffrey Meldrum, and John Bindernagel). Also, you can check out the work of Kathy Moskowitz, who tracks archaeological evidence of Bigfoot pictographs (Thanks to Jeb Card for sharing this with us!).

**Bioarchaeology**

What would Sasquatch look like from a bioarchaeological perspective if we did find the remains of the creature? Reports of Bigfoot describe it as being between 5.9 to 9.8 feet tall, weighing between 320 to 1000 pounds, covered with black to brownish red hair, wide shoulders and hips, long arms with stubby hands and non-opposable thumbs, a large pronounced brow-ridge and a crest at the top of the skull. Many of these traits could be found in human remains- the lower range of height and weight, pronounced brow ridges, and hairier bodies are possible.



*Primates without opposable thumbs includes the Marmoset... definitely no relationship to Bigfoot. Via Wikimedia.*

Other traits like the non-opposable thumbs would be obvious in the skeleton- opposable thumbs are found in most primates, so this trait would be very odd unless the creature is part human and part Tarsier or marmoset (which would be adorable but unlikley). The hair could be recovered from a burial if the conditions were correct- we find hair in burials where individuals are in dry or anarobic conditions (like peat bogs). If we were actually to find a Bigfoot skeleton, it is likely that we would be able to identify it based on the irregular height and frame- if it was 8.9 feet and 1000 pounds it would have very large bones- and the lack of opposable thumbs would be very obvious.

But we don't have evidence of Bigfoot bones. According to the Bigfoot Evidence blog, the lack of bones is because they have gone missing. Their news articles report findings of large human-like skeletons around 7 to 8 feet tall, but argue that the Smithsonian Museum discounted them as fakes and they were lost. Robert Lindsay argues that full skeletal remains are rarely found in the woods, and that Bigfoot creatures likely bury their dead, making finding their remains near impossible. Lindsay presents evidence that there are records of Bigfoot burials every 4 years and deaths every 2 years- you can visit his blog for an extensive evidence list. For those who find Bigfoot evidence, he suggests that "there seems to be a government conspiracy to cover up Bigfoot existence dating back 31 years. Therefore, the state is not to be trusted one bit with Bigfoot evidence. Universities have a nasty habit of losing Bigfoot hard evidence, so we should not automatically turn evidence over to them."




*2643694*

For a great rundown of Bigfoot hoaxes, see the Museum of Hoaxes website.

**Is Bigfoot Real?**

A couple of journal articles by Townsend claim that they have evidence of Bigfoot scavenging- stacked bones with large human-like teeth marks. Tomorrow, Lisa Bright will share her research and rebuttal of the evidence. Stay tuned!

**Challenge Accepted: Is There Archaeological Evidence of Bigfoot? (Part II)**

[This article is being co-written by myself, Katy Meyers Emery, and Lisa Bright, a graduate student at MSU in the



*Challenge Accepted: Is There Archaeological Evidence of Bigfoot? (Part II)*

mortuary archaeology program.] Today's article is a continuation of yesterday's review of Bigfoot- if you haven't already, read the first article, and then continue onto this one. To briefly review, Mitchel…

**Comparing Text with Human Remains in Ancient Egypt**

Text is an interesting type of artifact. Early historic and archaeological studies often took text as the truth about the past. It was accepted that we could read a passage from a historic document and that the archaeological record would simply support these 'known facts'. However, text isn't always accurate…

In "Bioarchaeology"

**11 responses to "Challenge Accepted: Is There Archaeological Evidence of Bigfoot? (Part I)"**



1. bkmeansOctober 28, 2015 at 8:42 amReply →

One of my students found on-line claims that Bigfoot was actually Giant Groundsloths, which apparently did not become extinct, according to these "researchers": http://bigfootevidence.blogspot.com/2012/06/bigfoot-and-ground-sloth-connection.html



Katy Meyers Emery October 28, 2015 at 8:54 am · · Reply →

Interesting theory… I'm still a fan of Bigfoot being a human-marmoset hybrid, which would be an amazing Halloween costume.



bkmeans October 30, 2015 at 8:29 am · ·

I have not seen that one…. back when I was a wee lad, the Six Million Dollar Man revealed that Bigfoot was an alien….



2. erin34 October 28, 2015 at 12:01 pm · · Reply →

This article scared the daylights out of me when I saw the headline, and was relieved when it turned out to not be a "proof of Bigfoot". However, you need to seriously look at any other piece written by Robert Lindsey before you put him in your article. Look up his website, and you will see that he has zero credibility in anything. He pushed the Rick Dyer debacle and his misogyny and racism is insane. Giving him any kind of credit pulls down what looks to be a fascinating subject, even though any mention of Bigfoot in Anthropology turns me into the Hulk.



Katy Meyers Emery October 28, 2015 at 12:41 pm · · Reply →

I did seriously look at the Lindsey article- but this blog article isn't written seriously, which is why there is a goofy cat meme below his quote. So no worries- I'm not supporting his work in any way!



3. Mark Walker October 28, 2015 at 12:37 pm · · Reply →

Out of morbid curiosity, do you have a link or citation for the Townsend article. Googling only gave me people talking about the article, but not the actual thing.



Katy Meyers Emery October 28, 2015 at 12:40 pm · · Reply →

We will be sharing more about that article tomorrow, but here's the link: http://sasquatchgenomeproject.org/linked/biotic_taphonomic_signature_analysis_and_neoichnology1.pdf



Mark Walker October 28, 2015 at 3:47 pm · ·

Thanks very much. I was wondering what journal published it. Now I know :-)

4. Matt October 28, 2015 at 12:39 pm · · Reply →

Looking forward to reading more in this series, because I love a good hoax. Hey have you ever read the fine print on the Gigantopithecus "reconstruction" sold by Bone Clones? The reconstruction was done by Grover Krantz, and rests on his notion that Gigantopithecus is an ancestor of Bigfoot, and was thus also bipedal. For your enjoyment:

https://boneclones.com/product/gigantopithecus-blacki-skull-and-jaw-reconstruction-BC-140



Katy Meyers Emery October 28, 2015 at 12:45 pm · · Reply →

Excellent! Thanks for sharing!

5. Pingback: Challenge Accepted: Is There Archaeological Evidence of Bigfoot? (Part I) | slloydicus·

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Today's article is a continuation of yesterday's review of Bigfoot- if you haven't already, read the first article, and then continue onto this one. To briefly review, Mitchel Townsend was featured in an article that announced that they had found archaeological evidence of Bigfoot and challenges scientists to refute their findings that the chewed bones they found are evidence for Bigfoot's existence.

Challenge Accepted! Today, we continue with Lisa's rebuttal of the evidence that Townsend found.

**Challenging the Evidence**

So let's get back to the real news- that a professor has supposedly found evidence of Bigfoot. When we look deeper into this, we found two unpublished articles more closely documenting their findings: "Using Biotic Taphonomy Signature Analysis and Neoichnology Profiling to determine the identify of the carnivore taxa responsible for the deposition and mechanical mastication of three independent prey bone assemblages in the Mount St. Helen's ecosystem of the Cascade mountain range" by Mills, Mills and Townsend (Forthcoming) and "Tooth Impression Analysis on Predator Killed Elk" also by Mills, Mills and Townsend (Forthcoming). The Mills and Townsend reports are interesting because they are not claiming to have located Bigfoot. Rather, they believe that they have located evidence of Bigfoot's dinner.

**Mills and Townsend "Evidence"**



*Stacked bones from Mills, Mills & Townsend 2015. Looks fairly natural to me...*

1. **Bone stacking technique:** They argue that they found nicely stacked piles of bone, which is evidence of human-like behavior, and the Department of Fish and Game determined that the stacking of bones was not a type of behavior seen in any known animal.

2. **Skeletal evidence:** Bones collected were mainly ribs and vertebrae from deer or elk.
3. **Bigfoot's teeth:** They claim that the impact marks are from incisors, canines, and double arched molars in a pattern that matches human teeth.



*Bite mark image from Mills, Mills and Townsend 2015. This is what the authors are calling a single tooth impact mark. Although it may have begun that way, the rib shows evidence of crushing and additional fracturing that makes taking this measurement impossible.*

4. **Bite marks:** They propose that the bite ratio can be reconstructed from the individual tooth impact marks, and that it is 2.5 times the width of the average human dental arcade.

5. **Tooth impact marks:** They conclude that there were several individuals consuming the deer and elk based on the tooth impressions. They also conclude that the 1.5 inch tooth impact mark width could not have come from a known animal.
6. **Timing:** The authors treat the "kill sites" as recent, even discussing evidence of grass trampling during the elk eating process.

What does this evidence mean? Bigfoot. *Really*? Yup, that is what it says- Bigfoot. But how does this evidence stand up to real scientific inquiry- here's Lisa to dispute the claims!

**Lisa's Evidence and Research**

The reason Lisa is qualified to dispute this, is it that they cite a public forum presentation she gave in 2010 as supporting their findings, which it definitely does not do. Her masters thesis, "Taphonomic Signatures of Animal Scavenging in Northern California: A Forensic Anthropological Analysis", sought to better understand scavenger behavior and modification of human remains in northern California. She examined skeletal remains housed in the California State University, Chico Human Identification Laboratory collection for scavenging damage, documenting both the pattern of damage as well as tooth impac mark data.

She also conducted a scavenging experiment by placing pig carcasses in rural wooded areas and used motion activated trail cameras to document scavenging activity. In this case, it was mostly black bears (sometimes more than 12 different bears) scavenging the pig carcasses. Just like the human skeletal sample, Lisa documented the scavenging damage patterns and tooth impact marks on the pig remains. She concluded that the tooth impact measurements didn't work. She had photographic evidence of what ate the pigs, and using standard methods those tooth pits and punctures by measurement alone could not be traced back to the bears that consumed them. Lisa did, however conclude that bears scavenge in a different pattern than other scavengers by eating areas of the highest fat concentration first (not the internal organs like dogs or coyotes do). If you're interested, you can also check out her video of the bears scavenging on YouTube!

**Lisa's Interpretation of the Evidence**

1. **Bone stacking technique:** Just because the Department of Fish and Game said an animal didn't pile the bones does not mean that it is otherworldly. Not only do the bones appear to be at the bottom of a slope (and we all know things roll down hill), but it's also possible that other



*Still from the video Lisa took during her experiment of bears scavenging a pig carcass.*

humans may have picked up and moved the bones, just like the authors did when they encountered them.

2. **Skeletal evidence:** Ribs are difficult bones to take tooth impact measurements on because of the complex shape, and their delicate nature. Ribs and vertebrae are prone to easy fracturing and distortion when being chewed on.
3. **Bigfoot's teeth:** Incisors typically don't leave impressions on bone, aside from small scrapes and furrows. Large pits and punctures are typically created by canine teeth.
4. **Bite marks:** The authors are trying to take bite mark analysis and dental arcade reconstructions typically used on flesh or soft material, and translating it to bone. That just does not work.
5. **Tooth impact marks:** When animal scavenge its possible for a single individual to leave a range tooth impact marks dependent on the depth, pressure, and angle at which they are chewing. They specifically cite a public presentation Lisa gave during the beginning of her thesis research (Bright 2010), where she did talk about the potential ability to infer scavenger activity based on disarticulatio sequence, scavenger behavior, and tried to look at tooth impression marks. However, her research concluded that it wasn't possible to identify the scavenger to species, or potentially even taxa, based only on the tooth impact marks. She had remains that she watched bears scavenge, that did not match the typical tooth impact marks proposed by th literature. The final results are available in her thesis (2011 – articles forthcoming).
6. **Timing:** The bones are highly weathered and sun bleached.Taphonomy is more than just scavenging; it's anything that happens to the remains after death including movement by gravity or water, human intervention, natural decomposition, etc. At the low end, it's likely that the bones have bee there a minimum of six months, probably more.

**Conclusion**



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In Lisa's opinion, the damage to the elk and deer remains has a much more logical explanation than Bigfoot. She have not seen th bones, but based on the pictures provided in the reports, she argues that it is most likely bear or coyote scavenging. Although tooth impact analysis may sometimes work to determine the general characteristics of a possible scavenger, her experience with it indicated that method is questionable. There's a lot of variation that can occur when a tooth impacts bone, especially on ribs. Taphonomy is also more than just animal activity. It involves considering the intrinsic and extrinsic properties of bone, length of outdoor exposure, weather patterns, decomposition timing, and a slew of other variables. All of these things need to be considered together when scavenged bones are analyzed.

**Works Cited**

Bright, Lisa 2011. Taphonomic Signatures of Animal Scavenging in Northern California: A Forensic Anthropological Analysis. Masters Thesis, UC Chico. Full Text Availale Online: https://www.academia.edu/9871150/Taphonomic_Signatures_of_Animal_Scavenging_in_Northern_California_A_Forensic_Anthropological_Analys

Aaron Mills, Gerald Mills, M. N. Townsend [Forthcoming]. Using Biotic Taphonomy Signature Analysis and Neoichnology Profiling to determine the identity of the carnivore taxa responsible for the deposition and mechanical mastication of three independent prey bone assemblages in the Mount St. Helen's ecosystem of the Cascade mountain range. Full Text Available Online: http://sasquatchgenomeproject.org/linked/biotic_taphonomic_signature_analysis_and_neoichnology1.pdf

**One response to "Challenge Accepted: Is There Archaeological Evidence of Bigfoot? (Part II)"**


1. Bob Mills October 29, 2015 at 9:57 am · · Reply →

Fascinating. Great article

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# WATCH: Is this the 'ghost' of 1943 RAF plane crash pilot caught on camera?

express.co.uk

**THIS "phantom hitchhiker" was thumbing a lift just yards from the scene of a fatal Second World War RAF plane crash, the friends who filmed him claim.**

By Jon Austin
PUBLISHED: 02:45, Wed, Aug 19, 2015 | UPDATED: 08:08, Wed, Aug 19, 2015




CHRISFELTON*YOUTUBE•GETTY

Rob Davies and Chris Felton claim the man "disappeared" when they turned back to pick him up.

The pair, who are both Gateshead Radio presenters and had been out recording an item about the anniversary of the medieval Battle of Otterburn between the Scottish and English, got out a camera to record the creepy figure after thinking it odd that he was dressed in beige RAF clothing.

They saw "the man" waiting by the side of a rural road near Belsay in Northumberland at round 11.30pm.

Rob, 27, from Whickham, said: "He was dressed in a beige colour from head to toe.

"He was sticking his arm out for a lift, but we could not stop in time due to being at 60mph.

"Chris, who was driving, decided to turn around for him but we both agreed that he looked a bit odd.

"We said we would pick him up if he was real and just make sure he was dropped at the nearest village, and joked he might be a phantom hitchhiker.

"I started filming on my iPhone as it seemed a bit odd."

Rob said "the spook" was wearing "RAF gear" and "was holding something under his arm, which looked like a helmet or bag."

They had to do a U-turn after seeing him again, to pick him up, but said just seconds later "the apparition" was gone.

Rob added: "We cannot explain it - the only explanation is that he walked off into the darkness.

"There was another car behind us but he did not stop either.

"We can only assume this driver would have seen him also as his clothes caught the light of the headlights."
They since discovered there was an RAF crash during a 1943 training exercise at Middleton Farm in fields jus behind where the figure was standing.
It was left the pair convinced they saw a ghost pilot and they are keen to discover if any other motorists saw him.

8 Comments

genie63 days ago
Nonsense the DE shouldn't write about the paranormal as they know absolutely nothing about it.
Reply

Per Mare Per TerramNEW66 days ago
"...thinking it odd that he was dressed in beige RAF clothing."
Nothing on that fuzzy footage could possibly identify it as RAF clothing. Complete tosh.

albert9rnNEW69 days ago
STRONG ALE IS SOLD IN NORTHUMBERLAND

RobinHoodNEW73 days ago
No !

FrancojockNEW73 days ago
Oh dear...not another one.
Every day we're subjected to drivel like this, with nothing ever beyond a very grainy photo to 'confirm' it.....and if its n8t that, it'll be funny shaped tomatoes, or weird burn marks on a piece of toast,...or maybe a miraculous cloud shape....it's all b0o11ox.
Enough already,....Eh??

unreconstruted 1NEW73 days ago
Even the ghost can't wait to leave the cess pitt this country has become

ChunkieNEW73 days ago
I agree VOTE UKIP and lets get this country sorted properly!

SteveA2NEW41 days ago
I wonder if ghosts can vote.

Saturday, 31st October 2015

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# Printing Bigfoot: ISU creates 3-D skeleton of "Bigfoot" for History Channel program

- By Josh Friesen jfriesen@journalnet.com
- Updated 19 hrs ago

POCATELLO — “Bigfoot Captured,” a documentary set to premiere on the History Channel on Monday, has Idaho State University’s prints all over it.

ISU anthropology and anatomy professor Jeff Meldrum offers his insights on the program, which delves into the possibility of Bigfoot existing and uses scientific evidence to back up that claim.

But Meldrum isn’t the only one from the university with their hands on the production of the History Channel special. The Idaho State University Robotics and Communication Systems Engineering Technology program built an 8-foot-tall Bigfoot skeleton using a series of 3D printers.

“To actually stand next to it was really, really quite amazing,” Meldrum said. “Even this was a bit of an academic exercise because obviously everything is just inferential, but what it conveys is that otherwise difficult-to-imagine sensation or impression of standing next to a skeleton that’s 8 feet tall. I mean it’s huge — massive.”

Because no actual Bigfoot skeletons have been unearthed, Meldrum had to reconstruct it based on what Bigfoot researchers believe the creature is related to.

Meldrum borrowed from the physical looks of extinct animals such as the Gigantopithecus blacki — an ancient ape that was twice the size of apes today — and the Neanderthal — a species of human that is said to have became extinct 40,000 years ago.

Meldrum took the Neanderthal skeleton, and technicians from the Idaho Virtualization Laboratory on ISU’s campus — under Meldrum’s guidance — digitally manipulated the skeleton to reflect the Bigfoot captured in the famous Patterson-Gimlin film.

“They made the shoulders much broader, the torso thicker, the arms longer, the legs the right proportion,” Meldrum said. “Then we took the Neanderthal skull away because it’s more human-like.”

So what did Meldrum and his team replace for the Bigfoot skeleton’s skull? They borrowed that from the likes of the Paranthropus boisei, an ape-like creature that roamed eastern Africa until about 1.2 million years ago. That skull is robust, wide, and it fit the look Meldrum was going for.

“We came up with a pretty interesting model, one that agreed with the creature that was depicted in the Patterson-Gimlin film,” Meldrum said.

Following the digital model's completion, on it went to be printed, which proved not to be a straightforward task. A 3-D printer works by feeding a type of plastic twine into a head. The head heats the plastic and spits it out, similar to a hot-glue gun. The head is assigned X-Y coordinates and lays down layers of the plastic, which harden. When the head finishes one plane, it begins on another.

Garen Call is an assistant in ISU's robotics and communications program, and the History Channel contacted him to help undertake the project.

The 3-D printing took 1,600 hours, and because the skeleton was so large, it needed to be printed in sections before being assembled. Printers from all over the state, and even one in Washington, were assigned specific body parts. When they were finished, those parts would be shipped to Call and his team to be put together.

"I got filmed in the show showing and talking about the process of printing, how it works and also on building the skeleton," Call said.

The final result? An upright, manipulable Bigfoot skeleton, modeled, printed and assembled by Meldrum, Call and their respective teams at ISU.

"I'm delighted these departments were not only interested, but willing to participate in an exercise that I hope will be insightful and informative, and in pursuing this fascinating question of the potential of the existence of a relic hominoid species," Meldrum said.

The History Channel would not allow media to publish a photo of the Bigfoot model before the documentary aired.

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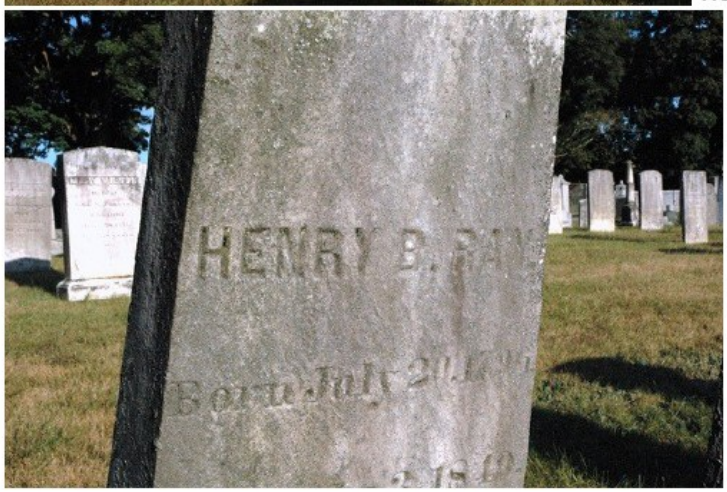
what: near:
Griswold, Connecticut

**Jewett City Vampires**

**The graves of a Connecticut family thought to be plagued by a vampire**

vampires, tombs, & cemeteries, catacombs, crypts, cemeteries, memento mori






- The Ray family, Connecticut's most famous vampire-plagued family
Photo by OddThingsIveSeen.com| Copyright: J.W. Ocker

Contributor:JWOcker (Editor)

In the first half of the 19th century, Henry and Lucy Ray of Jewett City had a comfortably-sized family of five children who all grew up and survived the many natural perils and hardships of childhood that were present in colonial America.

Over the course of a period of time that spanned the late 1840s to early 1850s, Henry and two of his adult sons, Lemuel and Elisha, died of a peculiar wasting away disease. Then in 1854, a third son, Henry Nelson Ray, was struck by this strange disease which today would have been identified as tuberculosis, but which back then was clearly the work of a vampire.

The family exhumed the bodies of Lemuel and Elisha, and burned them right there in the graveyard. The macabre family reunion made the newspapers of the day, and due in large part to the media attention, the Ray family is known today as the Jewett City Vampires.

The Ray family plot can be found toward the northern end of the small graveyard known as Jewett City Cemetery, which is located at the terminus of Anthony Street in Jewett City, a borough of the town of Griswold.

A line of headstones all bearing the three-letter surname now mark both the final resting places of most of the family, as well as the site of the bonfire. You can follow the timeline of events by the years incised into the grave stones. Although Henry Nelson Ray's stone is not in the family plot, there is a gravestone with his name incised on it at the other side of the cemetery with the death date of 1854, which alludes to the possibility that the vampire hunt might not have worked, after all.

Adapted with Permission from: The New England Grimpendium by J.W. Ocker

Edited by: EricGrundhauser (Admin), gwenleif, Rachel (Admin), renkessler (Editor), Allison (Admin)

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**Sources**

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Apotropaic Practices and the Undead: A Biogeochemical Assessment of Deviant Burials in Post-Medieval Poland

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## Abstract

Apotropaic observances-traditional practices intended to prevent evil-were not uncommon in post-medieval Poland, and included specific treatment of the dead for those considered at risk for becoming vampires. Excavations at the Drawsko 1 cemetery ($17^{th}$–$18^{th}$ c. AD) have revealed multiple examples (n=6) of such deviant burials amidst hundreds of normative interments. While historic records describe the many potential reasons why some were more susceptible to vampirism than others, no study has attempted to discern differences in social identity between individuals within standard and deviant burials using biogeochemical analyses of human skeletal remains. The hypothesis that the individuals selected for apotropaic burial rites were non-local immigrants whose geographic origins differed from the local community was tested using radiogenic strontium isotope ratios from archaeological dental enamel. $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios ($=0.7112 \pm 0.0006$, $1\sigma$) from the permanent molars of 60 individuals reflect a predominantly local population, with all individuals interred as potential vampires exhibiting local strontium isotope ratios. These data indicate that those targeted for apotropaic practices were not migrants to the region, but instead, represented local individuals whose social identity or manner of death marked them with suspicion in some other way. Cholera epidemics that swept across much of Eastern Europe during the $17^{th}$ century may provide one alternate explanation as to the reason behind these apotropaic mortuary customs, as the first person to die from an infectious disease outbreak was presumed more likely to return from the dead as a vampire.

## Strontium Isotopes and Geologic Variability

Strontium isotope analysis ($^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$) of archaeological human dental enamel enables us to investigate patterns of residential mobility for those interred at the Drawsko 1 cemetery, and in particular, permits an examination of the geographic origins of those individuals suspected of vampirism and selected for apotropaic burial rites. While the abundance of stable $^{86}Sr$ isotopes remains constant through time in the geologic environment, radiogenic $^{87}Sr$ isotopes result from the natural decay of $^{87}Rb$ (rubidium) in igneous rock and thus increase in number over time [54, 55]. Subsequently, older rocks such as granite possess more $^{87}Sr$ isotopes and elevated $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values relative to younger volcanic rocks like basalt [56]. In addition to age, the initial amount of Rb/Sr found in a particular mineral type also plays a role in resultant $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios [57].

Strontium isotopes enter into local ecosystems through the weathering of bedrock, disseminated from soils and groundwater into flora and fauna [58]. Because strontium is structurally similar to calcium, as humans consume these plants and animals, small amounts of strontium absorbed by the intestines substitute for calcium in the formation of enamel and bone hydroxyapatite [59]. Strontium uptake into the human skeleton is primarily determined by these consumed foods, and because the $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios within these products are a direct reflection of the distinct isotopic composition of a particular region's underlying geology, biogeochemical signatures in human dental enamel (which form only during childhood) offer a useful means of evaluating childhood geographic residence and mobility in the past [56]. However, factors including geologic heterogeneity (due to variable mineral ages and types in a given area) and differential weathering of bedrock make measuring bioavailable strontium using soil samples alone problematic; instead, animal values more broadly reflect available strontium in that environment and more closely approximate local $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios accessible to humans [56]. In this way, faunal $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values can be used to define locally bioavailable strontium for humans inhabiting a specific region – by taking the mean $\pm$ 2 standard deviations (s.d.) – and to detect non-local individuals whose strontium signatures fall outside of these designated limits of locality [56, 59].

Poland can be roughly divided geologically into northern and southern halves. The northern portion of Poland is dominated by the North European Plain, which sits between the Central European Highlands to the south and the Baltic Sea in the north. These lowlands, also encompassing Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and northern Germany, are comprised of Cenozoic sediments deposited in the Quaternary period, including coversands, loess, and glacial gravel [60]. Conversely, the southern uplands are primarily represented by the Carpathian Mountains in the south and the Sudetes in the southwest. These formations display considerable geologic heterogeneity, containing a combination of volcanic basalts, limestone, and granites. From the Sudeten range, Blusztajn and Hart [61] report Tertiary basalts with depleted $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios (0.7032–0.7037) relative to older rocks in the region, including Triassic and Cretaceous limestones

(0.707–0.708) [62] as well as old granites expected to produce even higher strontium isotope signatures [60].

Soil samples from across Poland produce a mean $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratio of 0.709 and range from 0.7069–0.7123, overlapping with values from the adjacent German plain (0.7086–0.7109) but exhibiting some elevated ratios (0.711–0.713) not seen in the west [60, 63, 64]. Still higher values (0.71427) are recorded at Szczepankowice in southwestern Poland [65]. Surface water (0.7078–0.7096) throughout Poland and from the Vistula River (0.7095) also fall within these ranges, although these, along with $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values from wheat (0.7090–0.7106) and butter (0.7088), do not approach the higher ratios recorded in soil extracts from both the north and the south [63,66,67]. Recent strontium isotope analyses of faunal and human samples from Poland [60,65,68] are discussed further below (see Discussion).

## Materials and Methods

Bone from multiple species of modern local fauna (n=6) was sampled to estimate $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ bioavailability at Drawsko, with local values reflective of the range produced by two standard deviations on either side of the mean [56]. Animals sampled as part of this study included hare (n=3), mice (n=2), and fox (n=1). Archaeological fauna were not present within the post-medieval mortuary context and were thus unavailable for sampling.

Enamel from a total of 60 human individuals (of the 285 burials excavated from 2008–2012, or 21% of excavated graves) dating to the post-medieval period were sampled from the cemetery at Drawsko, including 29 adult females, 29 adult males, and 2 immature individuals, or subadults. The two subadults (29/2008 and 6/2012) were included because they represent two of the six vampire burials recovered from the cemetery; the remaining four adults include three females and a single male. Dental enamel from a single permanent molar was analyzed from each individual, and depending on availability and tooth preservation, included the first molar (M1 mineralization occurs *in utero* until approx. 4.5 years of age), second molar (M2 – approx. 2.5–8.5 years of age), or third molar (M3 – approx. 8.5–15.5 years of age) [69]. An edentulous older female individual (60/2012) representing the fifth (of six total) vampire burial unearthed at Drawsko could not be analyzed due to antemortem tooth loss. Of the 60 individuals sampled here, 22 coins were distributed between females (n=14), males (n=7), and a subadult (n=1). Three vampire burials (6/2012, 24/2009, and 49/2012) of six contained a coin recovered beside the left side of the head, while a fourth (60/2010) was found with copper staining inside the mouth, but no coin.

The excellent preservation of these remains permitted estimates of both age and sex for almost all sampled individuals. Sex estimation techniques included observations of features on both the os coxae and crania [70], but were not attempted for the younger of the two subadults included in this study. Subadult age was estimated using dental development as well as the timing of dental

eruption and epiphyseal fusion [71]. Adult age estimates were based on observations of age-related changes to the pubic symphysis and auricular surface [70]. Human skeletal remains are currently housed at the Town Hall in the modern village of Drawsko, Poland.

Surface enamel from each tooth was mechanically removed to eliminate diagenetic contamination before extracting 3–5 mg of enamel powder for analysis, obtained using a Dremel Tool with an attached carbide drill bit. Sample preparation followed protocol outlined by Perry et al. [72]. Preparation and analysis of all samples took place at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Isotope Geochemistry Laboratory. Enamel samples dissolved in 3.5 M $HNO_3$ underwent column extraction using EiChrom Sr-Spec resin, with the resultant extract treated with 0.1 M $H_3PO_4$. Liquid samples were dried, re-dissolved in $TaCl_5$, and placed onto rhenium filaments where they were dried down with an electrical current. Radiogenic strontium isotope ratios were analyzed on a VG Micromass Sector 54 thermal ionization mass spectrometer (TIMS) in quintuple-collector dynamic mode. An internal ratio of $^{86}Sr/^{88}Sr=0.1194$ was used to correct for mass fractionation, and for the NBS-987 standard, ratios are reported relative to a value of $0.710270 \pm 0.000014$ ($2\sigma$). Internal precision for strontium runs is typically 0.000012–0.000018% ($2\sigma$) standard error based on 100 dynamic cycles of data collection.

Due to unequal sample sizes for deviant/non-deviant burials, as well as non-normal data distributions, non-parametric statistical tests (including Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis) were conducted using SAS 9.3. Specimen numbers are comprised of burial number and year of excavation and are listed in Table 2. The Drawsko I skeletal collection is stored in Poland at the District Office of Drawsko (URZĄD GMINY DRAWSKO, ul. Powstańców Wlkp. 121, 64–733 Drawsko). No permits were required to transport or analyze the Drawsko teeth as part of the current study, although an official permission letter was provided by the Slavia Project and International Project Coordinator Dr. Marek Polcyn. The excavation permit (Permit No. 42/2014/c) for the site of Drawsko I was issued by the Regional Conservator Office in Piła, Poland.

## Results

Fauna (n=6) from Drawsko exhibit a mean $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ value of $0.7101 \pm 0.0012$ ($2\sigma$), which was used to generate a local baseline ranging from 0.7082 to 0.7121 (Table 3, Figure 3). By species, hare (n=3) display an average $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratio of $0.7095 \pm 0.0005$ ($1\sigma$), while mice (n=2) show a more elevated mean of $0.71131 \pm 0.00002$ ($1\sigma$). A lone fox sample ($^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr=0.7097$) produced a value between these two.

Human dental enamel (n=60) demonstrates an overall, average ratio of $0.7112 \pm 0.0006$ ($1\sigma$) (Table 2, Figure 3). For adults (n=58; $0.7112 \pm 0.0006$, $1\sigma$), female $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values (n=29; $0.7111 \pm 0.0004$, $1\sigma$) do not differ statistically from males (n=29; $0.7112 \pm 0.0007$, $1\sigma$) (p=0.26; Mann-Whitney U). Subadults

**Table 2.** Strontium isotope ratios for post-medieval human enamel samples from Drawsko, Poland.

| Burial # | Year Excavated | Age Category | Age (Years) | Sex | Tooth | $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 2010 | Adult | 40–49 | M | $RM^1$ | 0.70999 |
| 5 | 2011 | Adult | 27–32 | F | $RM_2$ | 0.71002 |
| 1 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71006 |
| 46 | 2010 | Adult | 30–34 | F | $LM_1$ | 0.71011 |
| 64 | 2011 | Adult | 35–39 | M | $RM_3$ | 0.71013 |
| 4 | 2011 | Adult | 20–30 | M | $LM^1$ | 0.71026 |
| 12 | 2010 | Adult | 30–34 | F | $RM^1$ | 0.71034 |
| 30 | 2011 | Adult | 40–44 | F | $LM^2$ | 0.71045 |
| 26 | 2011 | Adult | 40–49 | M | $RM^1$ | 0.71046 |
| 35/40A - Box 1 | 2009 | Adult | 25–29 | M | $LM_1$ | 0.71065 |
| **49** | **2012** | **Adult** | **30–39** | **F** | **$LM^1$** | **0.71072** |
| **29** | **2008** | **Subadult** | **12–15** | **I** | **$LM^1$** | **0.71077** |
| 27 | 2008 | Adult | 30–39 | M | $LM_1$ | 0.71077 |
| 26 | 2008 | Adult | 40–49 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71078 |
| 28 | 2009 | Adult | 35–44 | F | $RM^1$ | 0.71080 |
| 24 | 2012 | Adult | 18–30 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71084 |
| 10 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | F | $RM^1$ | 0.71085 |
| 31 | 2009 | Adult | 30–39 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71090 |
| 40 | 2011 | Adult | 40–44 | F | $RM^2$ | 0.71096 |
| 37 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | M | $RM^1$ | 0.71099 |
| 8 | 2011 | Adult | 32–37 | F | $RM^1$ | 0.71102 |
| 2 | 2012 | Adult | 50+ | F | $LM^1$ | 0.71103 |
| 58 | 2011 | Adult | 25–29 | M | $LM^1$ | 0.71103 |
| 22 | 2008 | Adult | 50–59 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71104 |
| 25 | 2009 | Adult | 50–59 | F | $RM^1$ | 0.71104 |
| 2 | 2011 | Adult | 30–34 | M | $LM^2$ | 0.71109 |
| 21 | 2011 | Adult | 28–34 | F | $LM^1$ | 0.71111 |
| 5 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | F | $RM^3$ | 0.71115 |
| 23 | 2009 | Adult | 40–44 | F | $RM^1$ | 0.71116 |
| 14 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71117 |
| 20 | 2009 | Adult | 25–29 | F | $LM^1$ | 0.71118 |
| 66 | 2010 | Adult | 30–34 | F | $LM^1$ | 0.71119 |
| 1 | 2011 | Adult | 25–29 | F | $RM_2$ | 0.71123 |
| 19 | 2008 | Adult | 40–44 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71127 |
| 45 | 2008 | Adult | 50–59 | F | $LM_3$ | 0.71127 |
| 35 | 2008 | Adult | 40–44 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71128 |
| 11 | 2011 | Adult | 17–23 | M | $LM^1$ | 0.71128 |
| **28** | **2008** | **Adult** | **35–44** | **M** | **$LM_2$** | **0.71131** |
| 17 | 2009 | Adult | 25–29 | F | $LM^1$ | 0.71131 |
| 25 | 2011 | Adult | 25–29 | M | $LM^1$ | 0.71132 |
| 32 | 2011 | Adult | 27–35 | M | $RM^1$ | 0.71136 |
| 13 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | F | $LM_1$ | 0.71136 |
| 12 | 2011 | Adult | 40–44 | M | $LM_3$ | 0.71139 |
| **6** | **2012** | **Subadult** | **14–19** | **F** | **$RM_1$** | **0.71139** |

**Table 2.** Cont.

| Burial # | Year Excavated | Age Category | Age (Years) | Sex | Tooth | $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | 2012 | Adult | 18–30 | F | $LM_2$ | 0.71139 |
| 63 | 2010 | Adult | 35–39 | M | $LM_3$ | 0.71142 |
| 31 | 2012 | Adult | 18–30 | M | $RM^1$ | 0.71146 |
| 7 | 2009 | Adult | 25–35 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71146 |
| 23 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | M | $LM^1$ | 0.71148 |
| **24** | **2009** | **Adult** | **35–39** | **F** | **$RM^1$** | **0.71156** |
| 36 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | M | $RM_2$ | 0.71157 |
| 57 | 2011 | Adult | 30–34 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71169 |
| 42 | 2012 | Adult | 30–50 | M | $RM_2$ | 0.71176 |
| 35 | 2012 | Adult | 18–30 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71178 |
| 70 | 2010 | Adult | 40–44 | M | $RM^1$ | 0.71178 |
| 66 | 2011 | Adult | 35–39 | M | $LM_1$ | 0.71183 |
| 49 | 2010 | Adult | 40–44 | F | $RM_1$ | 0.71199 |
| 40 | 2008 | Adult | 35–44 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71230* |
| 36 | 2011 | Adult | 30–34 | M | $LM^1$ | 0.71283* |
| 82 | 2010 | Adult | 25–29 | M | $RM_1$ | 0.71301* |

Vampire burials are represented in bold text, while outliers are denoted with an asterisk.

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(n=2; $0.711 \pm 0.004$, $1\sigma$) share a similar mean, but small sample size prevents statistical comparison with adults. Individuals suspected of vampirism that underwent apotropaic burial rites (n=5) produce a mean $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratio of $0.7112 \pm 0.0004$ ($1\sigma$) and were not significantly different from either males or females interred within non-deviant mortuary contexts (p=0.54; Kruskal Wallis).

Three individuals (40/2008; 82/2010; 36/2011) fell outside local strontium isotope ratios for Drawsko, ranging in $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ value from 0.702301 to 0.713013 (Figures 3 & 4). All were adult males with age-at-death estimated at between 25–44 years, and two (40/2008; 36/2011) of these three were interred with coins.

**Table 3.** Strontium isotope ratios for modern local fauna from Drawsko, Poland.

| Site | Period | Fauna | Bone | $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Drawsko | Modern | mouse | mandible | 0.711296 |
| Drawsko | Modern | fox | tibia | 0.709740 |
| Drawsko | Modern | mouse | os coxa | 0.711328 |
| Drawsko | Modern | hare | frontal | 0.709752 |
| Drawsko | Modern | hare | femur | 0.709840 |
| Drawsko | Modern | hare | femur | 0.708853 |

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0113564.t003

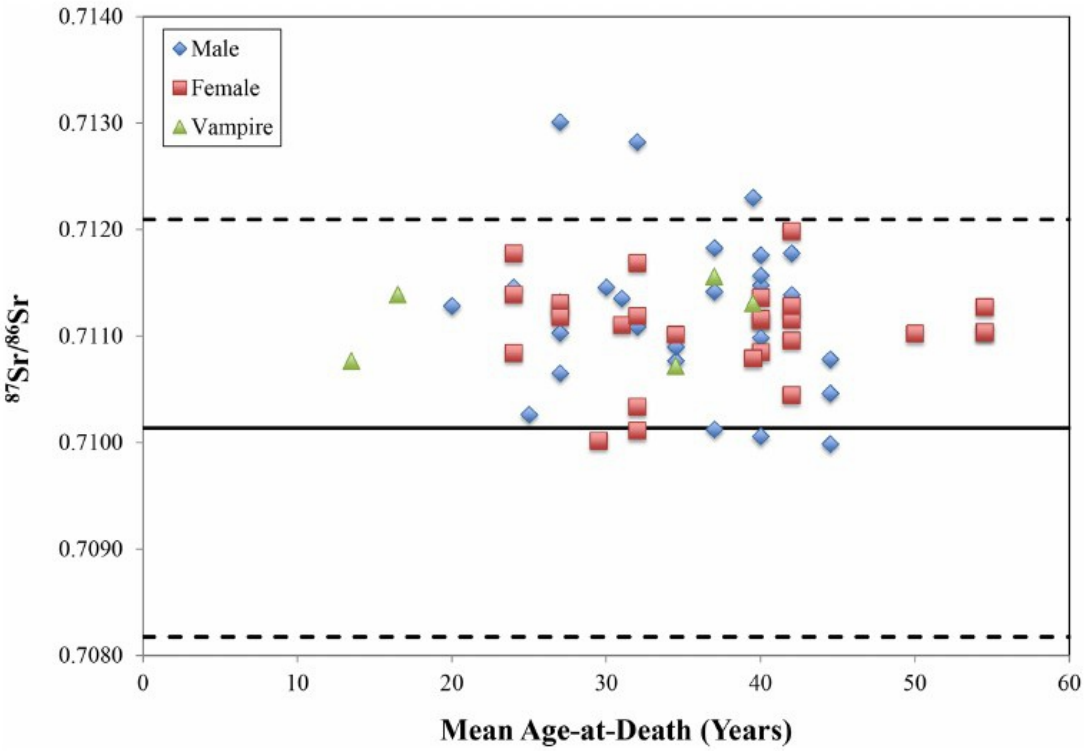



**Figure 3. Strontium isotope ratios from human dental enamel at Drawsko.** Age midpoints were taken from estimated age ranges for each individual. The area between the dotted lines represents expected bioavailable strontium for the site based on modern faunal $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values, while the solid line represents the mean faunal $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratio.

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## Discussion

### Strontium Isotopes at Drawsko

The majority (n=57) of individuals analyzed from the Drawsko 1 cemetery exhibit strontium values consistent with local ranges as defined by modern fauna, suggesting that they likely resided in/around Drawsko during childhood, when enamel mineralization takes place. Such an overall lack of mobility points to the establishment of settlements in the $16^{th}$–$17^{th}$ centuries throughout the Wieleń Estate (where Drawsko was located) *before* the cemetery was in use, when non-local migrants would have joined local Pomeranian communities to the west in populating the area. Moreover, of the five sampled individuals interred as vampires with sickles across their bodies and/or rocks beneath their jaws, all displayed local strontium isotope ratios, causing us to reject the hypothesis that these individuals were intentionally buried with apotropaics meant to prevent them from returning as the undead because of their 'outsider' status as non-local migrants to the area.

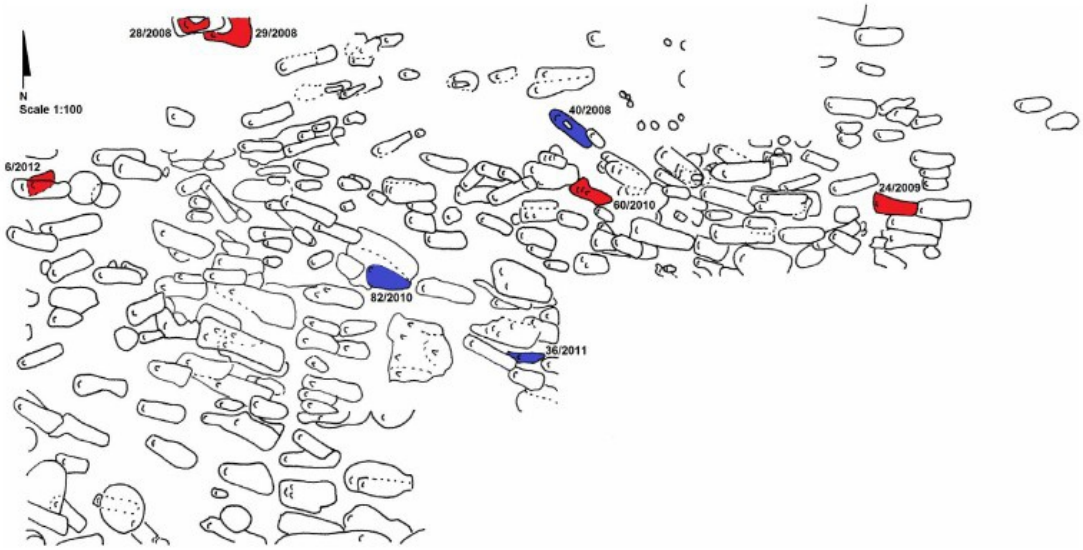



**Figure 4. Map of the Drawsko 1 cemetery (Scale 1:100).** Burials highlighted in red represent vampire graves, while those highlighted blue represent outliers as identified by strontium isotope analysis.

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Why, then, were these local individuals targeted when others were not? In addition to being an outsider, a multitude of attributes associated with vampirism also made *locals* susceptible to accusation, possibly resulting in apotropaic burial at Drawsko. Individuals ostracized during life for their strange physical features, those born out of wedlock or who remained unbaptized, and anyone whose death was unusual in some way – untimely, violent, the result of suicide, or even as the first to die in an infectious disease outbreak – all were considered vulnerable to reanimation after death [4, 5, 13, 16, 18]. In particular, historic records describe multiple cholera epidemics that swept through Poland throughout the 17$^{th}$ century as a result of contaminated water [28]. While cholera kills too quickly to produce pathognomonic changes visible on the skeleton [73], the unusual characteristics of the Drawsko 1 cemetery – including the absence of a church (from excavations to date), the seemingly random placement of multiple overlapping graves (see **Figure 4**), and poorly-fitted coffins (perhaps from rushed interment) – have hinted that the site may represent an epidemic burial ground resulting from a cholera outbreak [27]. Nevertheless, the enormity of the cemetery serving a small village like Drawsko calls this claim into question, making it more probable that while some of the interments at Drawsko 1 may indeed represent individuals killed by infectious disease, most do not [27]. Moreover, an examination of the mortality profile for 251 individuals from the site whose ages could be reliably estimated reflect an attritional cemetery, rather than a catastrophic cemetery (**Figure 5**), in which mortality peaks in the youngest ages (<5 years of age) followed by a secondary peak in older adults [74, 75]. Despite this, the possibility remains that the six individuals who underwent

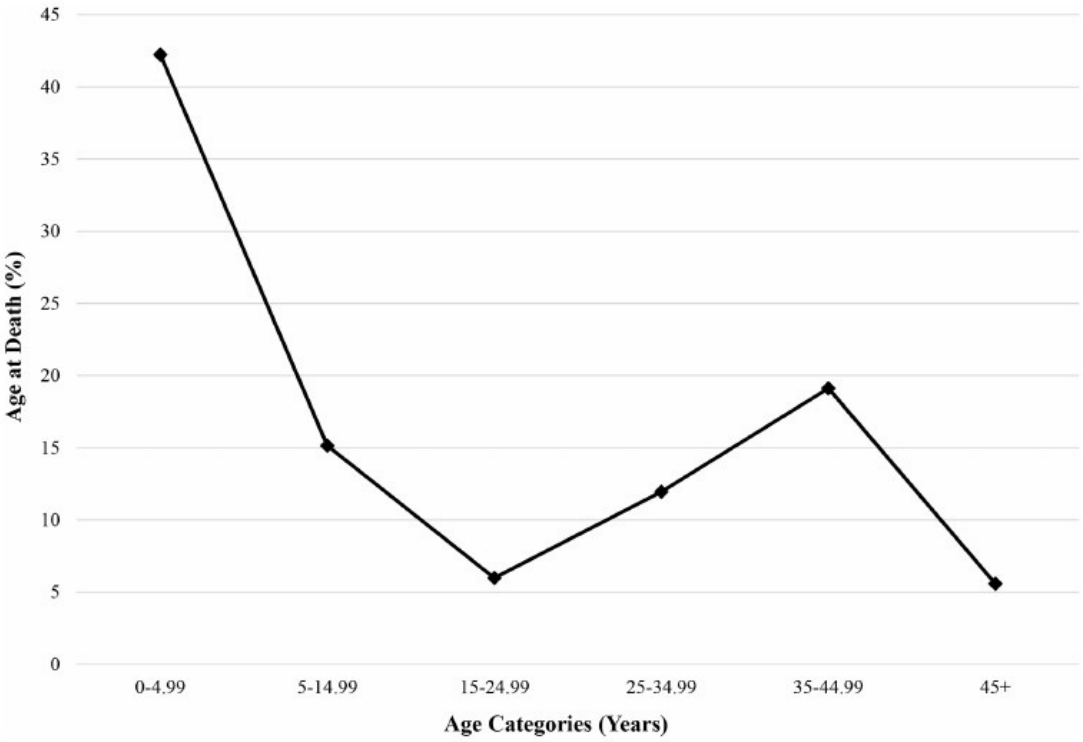



**Figure 5. Demographic profile for the Drawsko 1 site.**

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anti-vampiristic mortuary rites at Drawsko were the first to succumb to the disease during a series of outbreaks, instigating apotropaic action by the living. However, given the small settlement size, a separate epidemic cemetery was likely unnecessary, and individuals who may have died from cholera were simply interred in the communal cemetery.

While none of the five interments that included these apotropaics were identified as immigrants to the region, the presence of three males whose $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios exceed the upper limit of locally bioavailable strontium demonstrates that some residential mobility was indeed taking place during the time in which the cemetery was utilized by the community at Drawsko. Interestingly, these individuals were interred with no indication that their social or ethnic identity differed from that of the larger, local community – no foreign grave goods were recovered from their graves, nor were other, differentiating mortuary treatments apparent. This may suggest that – while identity is undoubtedly a multi-faceted social construct [e.g, see 76] – the role that migration may have played in the lives of these three individuals was not significant enough to be represented in death and/or was masked by other factors, including burial rites specific to Catholicism.

The identification of only males as non-local migrants to Drawsko may also shed light on what segments of society were afforded the ability to move from one

place to another, particularly as all females examined in the group exhibited local values. While textual records do not specifically describe whether single individuals or entire families migrated and settled in Poland during this period, the biogeochemical results from Drawsko indicate that men were more mobile. The timing of this period of mobility is likewise unclear – while all three males were identified as non-local as a result of $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios from first molar enamel crowns that form up to 4.5 years of age, age-at-death ranged from 25–44. Future studies will examine individual life histories and the relationship between strontium isotope ratios in both enamel and ribs to determine when migration may have occurred into adolescence and/or adulthood.

## Interregional Distribution of Strontium Isotopes

Despite a wide breadth of local values (0.7082–0.7121) produced by multiple species of modern fauna, human $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios at Drawsko were largely limited to the upper stratum of this range, with all but five individuals falling above the mean faunal value of 0.7101 (Figure 3). This suggests that strontium input for humans at Drawsko differed somewhat from that biologically available to the small fauna analyzed here (a difference also echoed between the various species of fauna themselves, which produced a bimodal distribution of $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values making an assessment of locality using standard deviation difficult). Differences in diet or lifestyle provide the most likely explanation for this disparity; additionally, because archaeological fauna were not available for testing, modern fauna may have been exposed to sources of strontium not encountered in the post-medieval period, including fertilizers [59]. Subsequently, human $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values themselves may provide a more accurate local range for Drawsko, with a human average of $0.711 \pm 0.001$ ($2\sigma$) producing ratios ranging from 0.7100 to 0.7123 (as with fauna, taking two standard deviations on either side of the mean) (Figure 6). Regardless of this shift in local $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values, the results are largely the same, with almost all individuals producing ratios local to the area except for two outliers – 82/2010 and 36/2011 – as opposed to three (with individual 40/2008) as identified by the local faunal baseline.

When examining local values produced by humans and/or fauna, a clearer picture emerges regarding the distribution of bioavailable radiogenic strontium isotopes throughout northern and central Europe. Significant overlap in local $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios occurs at sites located in Austria (0.7090–0.7100) [77], Germany (0.7082–0.7103) [64,77–80], Denmark (0.7090–0.7108) [64], and Hungary (0.7091–0.7107) [77,81], although the lowest values in the region derive from individuals sampled in Bavaria in southeastern Germany. While some overlap continues into the Czech Republic (0.7101–0.7109 [77] and Poland (0.7099–0.7147) [60,65,68], this region in general possesses $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values elevated (+0.7100) relative to western and central Europe. Nevertheless, such overlap indicates that more non-locals may in fact be present at Drawsko than can be identified by $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values alone. Moreover, it must be emphasized that because these local values were derived from particular sites, they do not

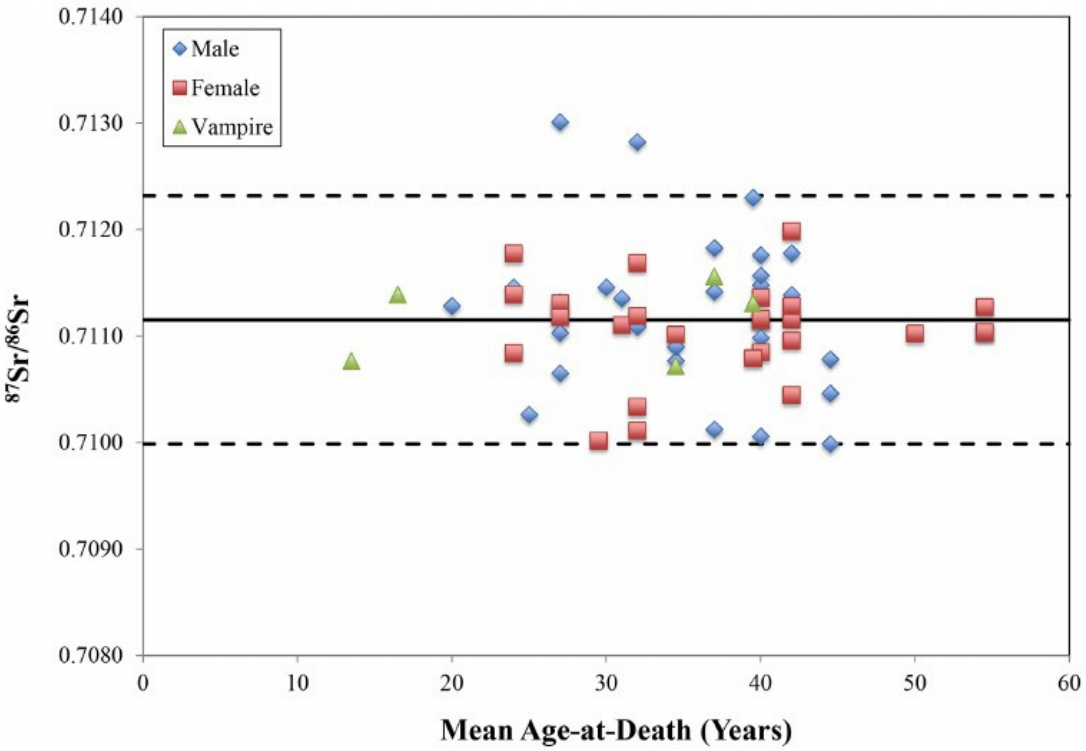



**Figure 6. Strontium isotope ratios from human dental enamel at Drawsko, with a local baseline now derived from human, and not faunal, $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values.**

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necessarily represent the geologic heterogeneity present throughout Europe, and are likely not representative of the total variation present in each country as a whole.

Considerable isotopic heterogeneity identified throughout Poland likely reflects geologic variability contrasted between the northern plains and the southern uplands. As reported by Buko and colleagues [60], archaeological human dental enamel $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios from across the northwest (0.7099–0.7113), where Drawsko is located, largely fall within local ranges for Drawsko, although three presumed outliers from Dębczyno (n=2; 0.7148–0.7151) and Pyrzyce (n=1; 0.7136) may point to additional examples of residential mobility throughout the region. These values from the northwest contrast sharply with local faunal ratios from central (0.7120–0.7135) [60] and southwestern (0.7147) [65] Poland, likely a result of the exposed older bedrock of the southern uplands, including the Carpathanian and Sudeten ranges. Additional Early Bronze Age human $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values (0.7125–0.7135) interpreted as local to Silesia in southwestern Poland by Pokutta [68] exhibit similarly elevated ranges relative to the north.

While additional strontium isotope data from across Europe is needed, it appears possible that the three non-local immigrants present at Drawsko

## Introduction

Deviant burials in the archaeological record refer specifically to those interments that differ from standard burial rites for a given community or culture [1]. While normative mortuary rituals offer valuable insight into social constructs of individual and group self among the living [2], deviant burials provide information on identity from a very different perspective – one in which normal burial was denied due to some social condition during life or as a result of a specific kind of death [3]. As treatment of the dead can reflect how the living view (or more idealistically, want to view) themselves, a study of deviant burial practices conversely illustrates action taken against the deceased because of a social identity (endowed during life or after death) incongruous with that of the larger culture. Such action may include the use of apotropaics – practices undertaken or objects utilized to prevent evil – within the grave itself [4]. These apotropaic rites play an important role in the interment of individuals suspected of turning into vampires throughout Eastern Europe in the medieval and post-medieval periods [4, 5, 6].

In addition to apotropaics, the skeletons of those receiving non-normative mortuary treatment are an especially rich source of data because the body acts not just as a biological representation of personhood, but as an entity shaped by social processes and affected by culture [7, 8, 9]. In particular, biogeochemical analyses of skeletal tissues reflect the impact of the social on the biological – most notably, the incorporation of stable isotopes into dental enamel and bone, which help archaeologists to elucidate aspects of social life in the past, including patterns of mobility and geographic origins. Subsequently, strontium isotope analysis was undertaken at the post-medieval cemetery site of Drawsko 1 ($17^{th}$–$18^{th}$ c. AD) in northwestern Poland to better discern social representations of identity as reflected in the differential burial of those designated as potential vampires in death by apotropaics. While individuals targeted as vampires might have been selected for a variety of reasons, the sociopolitical events of the post-medieval period in Poland, including well-documented, large-scale immigration to the region during this time [e.g., 10, 11, 12], suggested that those interred with anti-vampiristic apotropaics might be non-local migrants whose outsider status marked them with the potential to return from the dead. Correspondingly, it was hypothesized that the dental enamel of the six individuals buried as possible vampires would exhibit non-local strontium signatures relative to those contained within 'normal' graves, indicative of immigration to the region later in life.

## The Vampire in Eastern Europe

The notion of vampires, revenants, or the undead has a long history in both cultural folklore and literary works as well as in contemporary popular media. In the Slavic region of Eastern Europe, the vampire, or reanimated corpse, was established as early as the $11^{th}$ century AD [13, 14]. The term "vampire" probably originated from the Slavic expression for revenants, including *vampir* and *upir/*

($^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$=0.7123–0.7130) may have originated from central or southwestern Poland.

## Conclusions

The geographic origins of those interred in the post-medieval cemetery site of Drawsko 1 were investigated in order to assess whether apotropaic practices were specifically applied to non-local migrants thought to have the potential to become vampires due to their outsider status. Historic records describe characteristics that make one more susceptible to vampirism in death; it was these qualities that the living evaluated to determine the apotropaic inclusions necessary to accompany the deceased, as a means to prevent them from rising from their tombs and feeding on the living. While many of these characteristics (e.g., being unbaptized, practicing witchcraft) represent aspects of social identity and judgment difficult to reconstruct today using only human remains, other facets of identity are embedded into the skeleton itself, including the incorporation of stable isotopes into human bone and enamel during life. Specifically, the analysis of radiogenic strontium isotopes within dental enamel permit an examination of residential mobility and immigration – these biological markers can help explicate social definitions of the 'outsider' and determine whether individuals targeted for apotropaic rites were in fact non-locals.

The majority of individuals sampled exhibited $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values consistent with local ranges of bioavailable strontium for the area, suggesting that most of those interred in the cemetery had in life resided in or around Drawsko since early childhood. While geologic homogeneity across much of the North European Plain may mask some migrants to the region who were subsequently buried in the Drawsko 1 cemetery, three adult males did show elevated $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ ratios that fell outside the upper limit of this local range, demonstrating that migration to Drawsko was still taking place. Extensive isotopic mapping of north and central Europe by previous bioarchaeological studies has identified central Poland as a potential candidate for the origin of these individuals, although more work in Poland and Eastern Europe is required to more fully comprehend the complexity of strontium isoscapes and bioavailability across this region.

The $^{87}Sr/^{86}Sr$ values of those selected for deviant burial (defined as such by the presence of sickles lain across the neck or abdomen and stones placed beneath the mandible) are also indicative of local origins. Subsequently, these individuals were not suspected of becoming vampires due to their identity as non-locals, but instead, were distrusted within some other, additional societal context as members of the local community. Evidence of widespread cholera epidemics throughout the region during the post-medieval period may offer an alternate explanation as to the reason behind these apotropaic mortuary practices, as – in addition to being an outsider – the first person to die from an infectious disease outbreak was presumed more likely to return from the dead as a vampire. However, because

cholera kills quickly and does not leave behind visible markers on the skeleton, it is unclear if this is the case at Drawsko.

Strontium isotope data from the individuals interred at the cemetery at Drawsko provide new bioarchaeological perspectives into deviant burials and the motivations behind these unusual inhumation techniques. Moreover, this biogeochemical analysis highlights the complexities of examining social identity in the past, and how the construction of identity may be intertwined with biological processes contributing to the makeup of skeletal tissues. Future work will include stable oxygen and carbon isotope analysis of enamel and bone samples (as well as strontium isotope analyses of bone) to further investigate residential mobility, geographic origins, and dietary variability between normative and deviant burials throughout the life history of those inhabiting northwest Poland during the post-medieval period.

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## Author Contributions

Conceived and designed the experiments: LG. Performed the experiments: LG. Analyzed the data: LG. Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: LG. Contributed to the writing of the manuscript: LG TKB ABS MP.

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*upyr/upiór*, also similar to *uber*, the Turkish word for witches [15]. The vampire myth, however, likely originated much earlier and is a known mythic entity among the ancient Romans, Egyptians, and Greeks [15]. While the term "vampire" has been used to refer to a variety of comparable mythological beings from diverse cultures [4, 15], it is used here to refer to the beings of early Polish folklore: an unclean spirit that reanimates a corpse and wreaks havoc on the living [16, 17]. Here, we use "vampire" to refer to those who were *at risk* of becoming reanimated.

In Polish folklore, the soul and the body are distinct entities that separate upon a person's death. Souls, the majority of which are harmless, leave the body and continue to inhabit the earth for 40 days after death [13]. However, a small minority of these souls were seen as a direct threat to the living and at risk of becoming a vampire, particularly those who were marginalized in life for having an unusual physical appearance, practicing witchcraft, perishing first during an epidemic, committing suicide, being unbaptized or born out of wedlock, or being an outsider to the community [4, 5, 13, 16, 18, 19].

In order to prevent the soul of the deceased from reanimating a corpse as a vampire, specific burial rites were undertaken [20]. These burial customs are identifiable in the archaeological record, enabling researchers to distinguish vampire burials from the general populous. The inclusion of apotropaics, or grave goods that prevent evil or barricade an individual within the grave, is one of the most common anti-vampiristic methods employed [4, 5, 6]. For example, the inclusion of sharp instruments such as sickles or scythes placed over the neck and abdomen was believed to destroy the physical body if a vampire attempted to rise from the grave [4, 6].

While vampire folklore originated as part of pagan religious traditions across Eastern Europe, the adoption of Roman Catholicism in the 10$^{th}$ century did not curb belief in vampires throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods [10, 21]. To promote the acceptance of Catholicism, early medieval Christianity may have syncretistically incorporated pagan beliefs – including ancestor worship and a belief in vampirism – although there is much debate regarding the degree of assimilation of these pagan traditions [10, 22, 23]. Nevertheless, support for religious diversity was apparent as late as the 16$^{th}$ century, when the Warsaw Confederation document of AD 1573 clearly outlined religious tolerance and established religious freedom in Poland [24, 25, 26]. However, such tolerance seemed to ebb during the Catholic Reform of the 17$^{th}$ and 18$^{th}$ centuries, when Parliamentarian acts were passed that prevented non-Catholics from achieving certain government positions and prohibited the renunciation of Catholicism [25].

The turbulent nature of the Reformation period in Poland may have enabled pagan beliefs regarding vampirism and the undead to persist in what had become a predominantly Christian social order [10]. In what seems to be in direct conflict to the Reformation, some priests apparently accepted the inclusion of pagan mortuary customs in conjunction with Christian funeral rituals as long as Christian rites were maintained [5]. In particular, pagan burial traditions related

to fear of revenants and the reanimation of the dead persisted well into the post-medieval period [18, 20]. This acceptance of pagan burial rites may have actually benefited the Church in terms of encouraging adherence to Church doctrine [27].

## Apotropaic Practices at Drawsko

Drawsko is a rural settlement site in northwestern Poland that has been continuously occupied since the medieval period [28, 29]. Situated on the banks of the Noteć River, Drawsko has an associated post-medieval cemetery site located outside of the contemporary village on its eastern edge, designated Drawsko 1 [28, 29]. The Drawsko 1 cemetery has been dated to the 17$^{th}$ and 18$^{th}$ centuries AD based predominantly on coins recovered from the site. Initial excavations of the cemetery began in 1929; however, systematic excavations did not occur until 2008 [28, 29]. The cemetery is particularly unusual for this time period because of its far-removed location from Drawsko itself [27].

Approximately 285 human skeletons were recovered from Drawsko 1 between 2008–2012, representing individuals of all age categories and of both sexes. The remains are generally well preserved, and burials consist of individual interments, frequently lain in wooden coffins. All burials are primary inhumations with no evidence of secondary disturbances. Six of these interments have been classified as deviant (vampire) burials due to their non-normative mortuary features and apotropaic inclusions involving anti-vampiristic alterations. These include one adult male (28/2008), one late adolescent female (6/2012), three adult females (24/2009; 60/2010; 49/2012), and a subadult of unknown sex (29/2008); such demographic diversity indicates that apotropaic mortuary practices against vampirism were not sex or age-specific. Of these six individuals, five were interred with a sickle placed across the throat or abdomen, intended to remove the head or open the gut should they attempt to rise from the grave (**Figure 1**). Two individuals also had large stones positioned beneath their chins, likely as a preventative measure to keep the individual from biting others [4] or to block the throat so that the individual was unable feed on the living [30] (**Figure 2**). Interestingly, these burials are not segregated in the cemetery but were placed amidst non-deviant interments.

Other grave goods at Drawsko included medals and coins. Three medals, two of which depict St. Benedict, were found associated with three non-deviant burials. The image of St. Benedict and the cross represents a mortuary inclusion thought to ward off evil spirits, and was perhaps intended as an anti-vampiristic measure [31]. A third medal had no visible markings. Coins (n=119, represented in 36% of excavated graves) also signify an important apotropaic placed with the dead, and were thought to protect the body from evil spirits [4]. While these charms were sometimes simply laid on or near the body, many of these coins were placed under the tongue, not only to prevent a malicious spirit from entering the body through the mouth, but also to give the undead something to bite to dissuade them from feeding on the living [4, 5, 32].



**Figure 1. Individual 49/2012 (30–39 year old female) with a sickle placed across the neck.**

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Previous bioarchaeological research examining the health of the individuals recovered from the cemetery at Drawsko 1 has yielded no statistically significant patterns of disease, stress, or trauma between deviant and non-deviant burial groups [33]. These findings suggest that biological factors were not prime determinants in an individual's risk of becoming a vampire, at least based on the skeletal markers employed. Instead, it is likely that cultural factors were more often used to establish who was at risk of becoming a vampire and who was not. For example, newcomers to the community may have been viewed as outsiders and were thus seen as being at greater risk for vampirism upon their deaths [4].

Additionally, a recent pilot study examined cranial morphometrics of 11 individuals from the Drawsko 1 site, including two of the deviant burials (60/2010 and 6/2012) (34). While results indicated a moderate amount of cranial variation overall, potentially reflective of genetic admixture, one of the deviant burials (6/2012) was classified outside the range of normal variation within the Drawsko sample [34]. These results suggest that this individual may have been afforded different mortuary treatment as a result of her "outsider" status. However, this



**Figure 2. Individual 60/2010 (45–49 year old female) with a stone placed directly on top of the throat.**

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0113564.g002

lack of consistency between the two individuals assessed suggests that the catalyst(s) prompting a vampire burial may be the result of a variety of social and cultural influences.

Apotropaic rites involving vampires have been reported not only at Drawsko but across eastern Europe during both the medieval and post-medieval periods (Table 1) [35–43]. However, while reports of such deviant burials have dominated headlines, few publications formally describing these finds exist [5, 6, 17, 27, 39]. Nevertheless, this preliminary assessment illustrates similarities in interment strategies and apotropaic inclusions, the most common of which included decapitation, iron stake(s) driven through the body, and stones placed directly atop the body, all of which were meant to prevent the individual suspected of becoming a vampire from leaving its tomb and preying upon the living community.

## Population Heterogeneity and Migration in Post-Medieval Poland

Drawsko is located within *Wielkopolska* ("Greater Poland"), a region fundamental to the establishment of Poland as an independent country in the 10$^{th}$ century, particularly as the first Polish ruler, Mieszko I, resided there [10]. *Wielkopolska*, as well as Poland as a whole, was known for its religious and cultural heterogeneity as a result of various military conquests, religious tolerance offered by the state since the times of Casimir the Great (AD 1310–1370), and land acquisition and union with Lithuania (AD 1569) to form the ethnically diverse Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [44]. As a republic with an elected king whose power was limited and controlled by the Parliament, religious and political freedoms were an inherent part of the Commonwealth's political system [44].

By the 17$^{th}$ century, this diverse Polish population is estimated to have reached 7–8 million people [45, 46], in part a response to an influx of immigrants from across Europe. For instance, driven by economic and religious reasons, the immigration of Scots into mainland Europe began as early as the 14$^{th}$ century and continued well into the 17$^{th}$ century [47, 48, 49]. Tax records indicate that Scottish immigrants inhabited over one hundred localities within Poland but were largely centered in Warsaw, Poznań, Gdańsk, and Kraków [48, 49]. From the Balkan Peninsula to the south, the Vlach ethnic group began migrating northward during the medieval period and reached the mountainous region of southern Poland in the late 14$^{th}$ century; assimilation with the local Ruthenian population gave rise to numerous, distinct ethnic groups still inhabiting the region today [50]. Furthermore, the extension of Polish territory to the east and its subsequent union with Lithuania (AD 1386) and the Grand Lithuanian Duchy (AD 1569) to form the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth contributed greatly to the multi-ethnic nature of this nation and resulted in the regional movement of Tatars, Armenians, Latvians, and Ruthenians into Poland [44].

**Table 1.** Deviant burials associated with vampirism across Eastern Europe as assessed through popular media reports and published literature, in chronological order.

| Site | Country | Date (century AD) | Period | # of Deviant Burials | Description | | | | | | | | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Decapitation/ Dismem-berment | Stake/Nails in body | Stone in/ beneath jaw | Stones on body | Bound limbs | Sickle across body | Burning event | Coffin w/iron bars | |
| Celakovice | Czech Republic | 10–11th | Medieval | 14 | X | X | | X | | | | | [35] |
| Cedynia 2a | Poland | 10–12th | Medieval | 24+ | X | | | X | X | | X | | [5] |
| Dębczyn | Poland | 10–13th | Medieval | 1 | X | | | X | | | | | [5] |
| Cedynia 2a | Poland | 12th | Medieval | 6 | X | X | | X | | | | | [5] |
| Perperikon | Bulgaria | 13–14th | Medieval | 1 | | X | | | | | | | [36] |
| Sozopol | Bulgaria | 14th | Medieval | 1 | | X | | | | | | | [37] |
| Debelt | Bulgaria | Not specified | Medieval | 6 | | X | | | | | | | [37] |
| Veliko Tarnovo | Bulgaria | Not specified | Medieval | 1 | | | | | X | | | | [38] |
| Lazzaretto Nuovo | Italy | 16th | Post-Medieval | 1 | | | X | | | | | | [39] |
| Gliwice* | Poland | 16th | Post-Medieval | 4 | X | | | | | | | | [40] |
| Kamien Pomorski | Poland | 16th | Post-Medieval | 1 | X | X | X | | | | | | [41] |
| Prostejov | Slovakia | 16th | Post-Medieval | 1 | X | | | X | | | | X | [42] |
| **Drawsko** | **Poland** | **17th** | **Post-Medieval** | **6** | | | **X** | | | **X** | | | [27] |
| Lesbos | Greece | 19th | Ottoman | 1 | | X | | | | | | | [43] |

*Others have interpreted these as executed criminals.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0113564.t001

From the west, German and Flemmish immigration into Poland started as early as the 13th century, with the largest conglomeration of migrants settling in the Kraków area [45, 46]. At that time, Kraków – capital of the Polish-Lithuanian superpower, seat of the famous university, and a large center of commerce – was particularly enticing to German settlers, including wealthy patrons of the arts who successfully attracted German painters and sculptors to the region, as well as talented craftsmen and printers [51]. Also from the west, Mennonites from what is now the Netherlands and northern Germany (Friesland) were given religious freedom and privileges such as rent and tax concessions from the Polish state beginning around the 16th century [44]. Well known for their abilities to drain marshlands for habitation and agriculture, migrants were initially brought to Poland to reclaim marshy areas on the alluvial delta of the Vistula River, and by the mid-17th century, large migrant communities had settled around Włocławek, Świecie, Toruń, Malbork, and Chełm [44]. In addition, Jews expelled from their homelands or fleeing persecution flocked to Poland from western Europe in the aftermath of the Crusades throughout the 14th and 15th centuries [52].

Drawsko itself was located within the Wieleń Estate, a royal property sparsely populated until AD 1515, when a shift to private ownership instigated the rise of a number of new villages throughout the 16th and 17th centuries [53]. These villages – located in both *sołtysie* (forested areas) and *olęderskie* (marshlands) – were comprised not only of Pomeranian locals but also by settlers from the west, including Brandenburg and the Netherlands, seeking improved socioeconomic conditions and religious freedom [53]. While the most dramatic colonization of the Wieleń area began in the 1580s when the estate was owned by the Górka family, another wave of immigration took place in the early 18th century in response to the devastating cholera epidemics throughout *Wielkopolska* and other lands of the Crown [53]. Nevertheless, a brief respite from colonization occurred between AD 1750–1760 – corresponding to the beginning of the demise of the feudal system – during which time many local peasants were relocated from Wielkopolska to Brandenburg [53].

The overwhelming historical evidence for migration to Poland – as well as the diverse composition of its population by the post-medieval period – illustrates that the inhabitants of Drawsko would likely have dealt with issues of immigration and witnessed the growth of an increasingly multi-ethnic community during the 17th century. However, how this rural village may have adapted or negotiated its changing social identity is less clear, particularly with regards to the treatment (in life and in death) of outsiders entering the area. Because outsiders were considered to be more susceptible to vampirism after death [4], it was hypothesized that those targeted for apotropaic burial rites were migrants to the Drawsko area. While differences in ethnic identity could not be readily discerned from the Drawsko 1 interments, non-local migrants to a region may be identified using radiogenic strontium isotopes incorporated into human skeletal tissues.

# Land disturbance in Wyoming stirring up unwarranted fears doubtfulnews.com

**October 30, 2015 • 5 Comments**

Hunters on a private ranch in Wyoming's Bighorn mountains were astonished to find a land disturbance of impressive proportions.



*bighorn mtn slide*

The news first appeared on the Facebook page of the SNS Outfitters and Guides. Since then, it was picked up by several mystery mongering sites that declared it was "apocalyptic" (as is everything unusual) or related to the Yellowstone caldera, a supervolcano that they revel in announcing is going to blow its top every other month.

Well, it's neither. The earth is not falling apart. Chill!

The earth is dynamic. It moves. This movement of soil and rock is not unusual and, though it looks huge, it's small on a geologic scale.

GrindTV has more photos. Though, the photos show people really close to the edges. This is NOT recommended since the ground is unstable. This would be significantly more dangerous if it was raining since erosion of this feature is going on all the time, water will accelerate it.

It's speculated that water caused it. Underground water. According to the local Powell Tribune, geologists from the Wyoming Geological Survey think this slumping of the land, where it pulled apart, could have been caused by a subsurface weakness that failed due to moisture such as from a groundwater source. Often geologic hazards exist for years in a precarious state needing just some small trigger to let them loose whereby they manifest on the surface and cause damage. In other areas of the US, layers of clay either swell or shrink depending on the water input causing slides. Obviously, heavy rains are the most obvious triggers for landslides. This particular slide looks odd because it separated but did not "fall".

The state geologists can't get data on this site because it's private land and they will need permission to study it. They would be able to measure the current surface and determine from previous maps in which direction and how much the land moved en masse.

Other such impressive cracks in the earth surface have been noted due to heavy rains, faults, or groundwater withdrawals that cause the land to settle. Or, from frost.

But, we can be sure that this has no bearing on the state of a Yellowstone eruption. Don't get your science news from sites written by amateurs with agendas looking for ad revenue. Just don't. And not everything signals the APOCALYPSE!

This jagged gash in Wyoming will heal itself in a few years leaving a hummocky surface where vegetation will return.

*The present is the key to the past*. Landslide areas are often prone to slide again, maybe not in our lifetime but in geologic time. Nothing is stable, things change. But, don't fret, hardly anyone ever falls in the cracks.

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Tags:

**5 comments for "Land disturbance in Wyoming stirring up unwarranted fears"**

1. Tony
October 30, 2015 at 12:41 PM

On the other hand, this looks like a great location to film "Game of Thrones."

2. kittynh
October 30, 2015 at 1:29 PM

I would say that asking a GEOLOGIST isn't nearly as much fun as predicting END TIMES. This reminds me of when the buffalo were leaving Yellowstone and no one thought to ask a BIOLOGIST or even say someone that owns a buffalo ranch, about animal behavior. because it's all about the clicks… and END TIMES is right up there with Bigfoot.

3. Perry
October 30, 2015 at 6:40 PM

see this article from a few days ago:

"Enormous, 'catastrophic' landslide in northern Canada almost went undetected by humans"

http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/how-an-enormous-catastrophic-landslide-in-northern-canada-almost-went-undetected-by-humans

"It was enough rock and ice to equal the weight of 33 million pickup trucks. And for an earth-shattering two minutes, it barrelled down a mountain at nearly 200 km/h, pulverizing everything in its path. And the Yukon didn't even know it was there. … Expected to rank among the world's 10 largest landslides for 2015"

4. idoubtit
October 30, 2015 at 7:05 PM

The American Geophysical Union blog has a post up with an educated guess.
http://blogs.agu.org/landslideblog/2015/10/30/big-horn-mountains-landslide/

“The fissure is undoubtedly the rear tension crack that has opened up as the whole mass has slid forward. On the left side as seen in the image directly above the movement has generated two new lateral shears. On the right side the lateral shear lies within the gully to facilitate movement. The toe of the landslide is characterised by a massive zone of buckling and compression. There may be some evidence that the main body is going through some internal deformation – note the possible cracks in the slope on the right side in the area in shadow.

I suspect that water did play a role in this landslide, but in general the role is to change effective stress not to provide lubrication. There is a good chance though that this is a progressive failure and that the changes in the behaviour of the springs occurred as the internal drainage of the slope replumbed itself as the deformation developed.”

5. Asha
October 30, 2015 at 8:10 PM

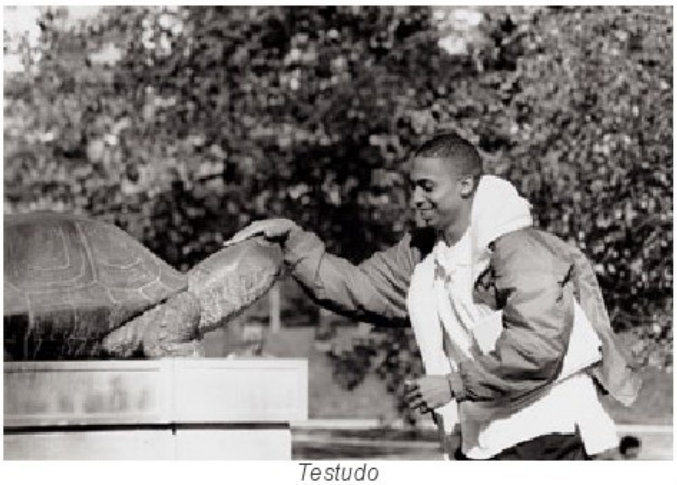
Apocalyptic? More like, fascinating!
I can’t do more than speculate, but it seems that the weather we’ve had in central and northern Colorado, and up into Wyoming this year may help to explain why it happened, as it seems to further validate everything that Sharon stated. We had an unusually wet spring, with more quite a bit more rain fall than has been seen in an average spring over the last decade, followed by a very hot, dry summer and fall, and things have only recently started to cool off, with our first overnight freezes having occurred within the last month, often after an unseasonably warm or hot day, at least in central and northern Colorado, and into southern Wyoming, along the front range/I-25 corridor.

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## Testudo

Testudo is the centerpiece of our campus, and the act of rubbing his nose for good luck is our most-enduring tradition. The original statue, which now stands in front of McKeldin Library, was the gift of the Class of 1933 whose members felt it was high time that the University of Maryland had an official mascot. Even though the United States was in the midst of the Great Depression, the 268 members of the class managed to gather enough funds for the sculpture by holding their prom on campus, rather than in a fancy hotel in downtown Washington, contributing their profits from the 1932 *Reveille* yearbook, cancelling the publication of the *Old Line* magazine, and gathering other donations. Student Government Association president Ralph Williams then took a live terrapin north to Providence, Rhode Island, by train to be captured in bronze by sculptor Aristide Cianfarani and the Gorham Manufacturing Co., which cast the statue.



*Testudo*

After dedication ceremonies on Class Day in June 1933, Testudo assumed watch over the campus from a pedestal in front of Ritchie Coliseum next to Route 1. Although he was not a light-weight at 300 pounds, he was subject to capture by students from rival schools, usually before major athletic contests. One of the most memorable such incidents occurred before the Maryland vs. Johns Hopkins national lacrosse championship game in 1947. A group of Hopkins students kidnapped Testudo and carted him off to Baltimore, where they buried him for safekeeping. They then prepared their Alumni Memorial Residence for battle by stringing barbed wire and laying in a supply of fire hoses and soap chips. When the contingent of approximately 250 University of Maryland rescuers arrived at 2 a.m. on the morning of the game, they were soaked by the fire hoses, and those Terps that succeeded in entering the dormitory slid all over the soap-slicked floors. Over 200 Baltimore policemen fought for almost two hours to control the chaos, in the process arresting eleven students, three from Hopkins and eight from Maryland, for disorderly conduct. Hopkins dean G. Wilson Shaffer finally put an end to the battle by ordering the excavation and return of Testudo before the opening face-off of the big game. The Hopkins students complied, but painted a large, blue "H" on him before his trip home. Some of the Maryland students later shaved the heads of the Hopkins offenders as punishment.

To avoid a repeat of such incidents, campus officials later filled Testudo with cement and steel rods, bringing his total weight to approximately 1,000 pounds, and permanently attached him to his base. They also decided to move Testudo to a more secure location, and, after several shifts, positioned him in front of McKeldin Library in 1965, where he remains to this

day.

The tradition of rubbing his nose for good luck has given Testudo quite a sheen since 1933! More recently, beginning in the early 1990s, students have begun to leave Testudo offerings of any imaginable kind--food, cigarettes, soda, beer, poems, computer discs, candy, flowers, coins--at final exam time.

Testudo is truly the traditional heart of our campus! So strong is his power that five exact copies of the original statue have been installed on campus: outside the Comcast Center, inside the Stamp Student Union, one on either side of the Gossett Football Team House, and outside the Samuel Riggs IV Alumni Center--to spread his magic.

Thank you to the Class of 1933 for creating such a powerful symbol of the University of Maryland spirit! And long live Testudo!

University of Maryland | College Park, MD 20742-7011, (301) 405-0800

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# Man bursts into flames at Sweden train station

*msnbc.com*
*11/22/2011 9:13:29 PM ET*
nbcnews.com

**Police puzzled as hospitalized victim is too hurt to talk**

An unidentified man burst into flames while waiting outside a train station in Sweden, leaving police flummoxed, the Göteborgs-Posten reported.

Witnesses said the man was standing outside a music shop at the Gothenberg central train station around 10:30 p.m. Sunday, when he suddenly caught on fire.

"He just stood there burning outside the shop," a witness told the paper. "After a while he started screaming. There were a few people about but they just watched him. I ran up to him, tore my coat off and managed to put the fire out together with another guy."

The man, who sustained serious injuries, was taken to Gothenburg's Sahlgrenska hospital, where he was sedated.

Police have been at the hospital since the incident trying to piece together what happened.

"All we know is that it's a man. We have no knowledge of his identity, nor of his age or any motive or even the circumstances of the incident," Asa Anderson, a police officer, told the newspaper.

The man has not been in a condition to speak, said the officer.

"He is sedated and will probably remain under for another couple of weeks."

Police do not suspect foul play.

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# Mary I's phantom pregnancy

*Tuesday 12th May 2015*



The first queen of England in her own right, Mary I was known as 'Bloody Mary' for her brutal persecution of Protestants. But she is also remembered for her phantom pregnancy of 1555. Perhaps a result of the queen's overwhelming desire to have a child, the peculiar episode had great political consequences for her reign



*Portrait of Mary I, 1554. Found in the collection of the Museo del Prado, Madrid. (Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images)*

**Here, Professor Carole Levin from the University of Nebraska investigates…**

With the recent birth of Princess Charlotte Elizabeth Diana, daughter of Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, there has been much excitement, pleasure and celebration.

On 30 April 1555 there was a similar rejoicing over the birth of a royal infant: bells rang, bonfires were lit and there were celebrations in the street, following news that Mary I had given birth to a healthy son. But in reality there was no boy, and eventually all hope of a child died out. What was thought to be a royal pregnancy ended in sadness, humiliation and political turmoil. This was the phantom pregnancy of Mary I.

Mary was declared queen on 19 July 1553, less than a fortnight after the death of her half-brother, Edward VI, and just days after Lady Jane Grey was briefly acclaimed queen [the decision to make Grey queen was reversed in light of Mary's widespread popular support]. When the boy-king, Edward, died, there were no appropriate male heirs to the throne, and thus his older half-sister Mary, Henry VIII's oldest child, became queen of England – and a Catholic queen at that.

As soon as Mary was crowned, everyone – including Mary herself – expected her to marry so that she could bear a child. This would hopefully be a son, so that the English could look forward to someday having a king again. As Mary was already 37, there was no time to waste.

Mary decided to marry Philip II of Spain, the son of Charles V. For a number of months the Spanish feared it was not safe for Philip to come to England because there was such uproar over the proposed marriage. Though he eventually came, it meant the two were not married until 25 July 1554, more than a year after Mary ascended the throne.

By September there were rumours that Mary was pregnant, though as late as November the queen herself was unsure. According to medical texts from the period, it was very difficult to

tell a false pregnancy from a real one – at least until a baby was born, or too much time had passed. However, Mary stated towards the end of the month that she felt the child move in her womb.

Those at both the English and the Spanish courts were delighted by Mary's pregnancy, but there were still some, including Spanish ambassador Simon Renard, who wondered if the queen was really with child. But he thought it would be good for the Anglo-Spanish alliance if she were, reportedly announcing in one of his dispatches: "If it is true, everything will calm down and go smoothly here." [Jo Eldridge Carney's *Fairy Tale Queens: Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012].



*c1554, Philip II (king of Spain from 1556) with Queen Mary I of England. The pair married in 1554. Original artwork: engraved by Joseph Brown after the drawing by G P Harding of 1812, after the painting by Antonio Moro. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)*

Mary, now thoroughly convinced she was pregnant, expected she would give birth in May 1555. The birth chamber was prepared, as was the nursery with a beautifully carved cradle, and many women were hired to help care for the baby. Letters announcing the birth were written, with just the date and the sex of the infant to be filled in. Historian Chris Skidmore claims the word 'Fil' (son) was written on the letters because it could easily be amended to 'fille' if the baby was the girl. [Chris Skidmore's *Death and the Virgin: Elizabeth, Dudley and the Mysterious Fate of Amy Robsart*, Orion, 2010]. Mary and Philip went to Hampton Court, where they wanted the birth to take place.

The rumours of Mary's safe delivery soon spread abroad, and those on the continent even sent out letters of congratulations. In London, one preacher reported that no one had ever before seen such a beautiful prince. But in fact, no one had seen this prince. It soon became known the rumour was false, yet Mary and Philip waited.

As May became June, Mary stayed in her chamber, refusing to see people, but not giving up hope. Though in July Mary asserted she was still pregnant, and had simply miscalculated her timings, by the end of the month all hope was gone. In early August Mary left her chamber at Hampton Court for a smaller, more private residence. Giovanni Michieli, the Venetian ambassador, wrote that Mary's pregnancy was more likely to "end in wind rather than anything else".

Everywhere there was gossip and speculation. Had the people been told she was pregnant to keep them happy and supportive of their queen? Surely that was a shortsighted idea, if so! Some were convinced that Mary was ill, and had simply convinced herself she was pregnant, while others claimed that she had been pregnant and her miscarriage kept secret. Some were convinced that she had never been pregnant at all, and the plan for some other baby boy to be smuggled into the court had somehow fallen apart. A few wondered if the queen were even still alive, or if those in power put an effigy of her in the window for people to see. One particularly strange idea was that instead of a baby, Mary had given birth to a mole!

The story of the queen's failed, fictive pregnancy was so powerful that it came around again more than a century later, when James VII and II's second wife, another Catholic Mary [of Modena], fell pregnant. Many spoke of Mary I, and how now once again a queen was not really pregnant. It was later claimed that a baseborn boy had been smuggled into the palace in a warming pan to be presented as Mary's child.



*Mary of Modena with her son, James Francis Edward Stewart (or Stuart), Chevalier de St George, c1689. James later claimed the English, Scottish and Irish thrones and was known as 'The Old Pretender'. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)*

The reign of 'Bloody Mary' ended in disappointment and despair, with no heir to the throne. The country turned happily instead to her younger half-sister, Elizabeth. For Protestant historians writing in the next century, the futile, phantom pregnancy became a metaphor for all of Mary's failures – especially the burning of around 300 people as heretics.

**Carole Levin is Willa Cather professor of history and director of the medieval and renaissance studies programme at the University of Nebraska. She is also Fulbright scholar at the University of York.**

**Levin will be speaking about Mary I and phantom pregnancies as part of University College London's festival of the arts on Wednesday 20 May. For more information, click here.**

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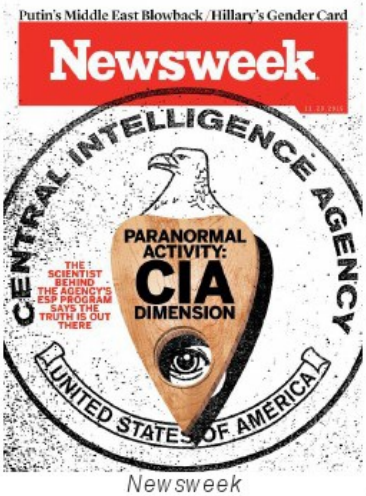
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# Meet the Former Pentagon Scientist Who Says Psychics Can Help American Spies

*By Jim Popkin / November 12, 2015 6:58 AM EST*

newsweek.com



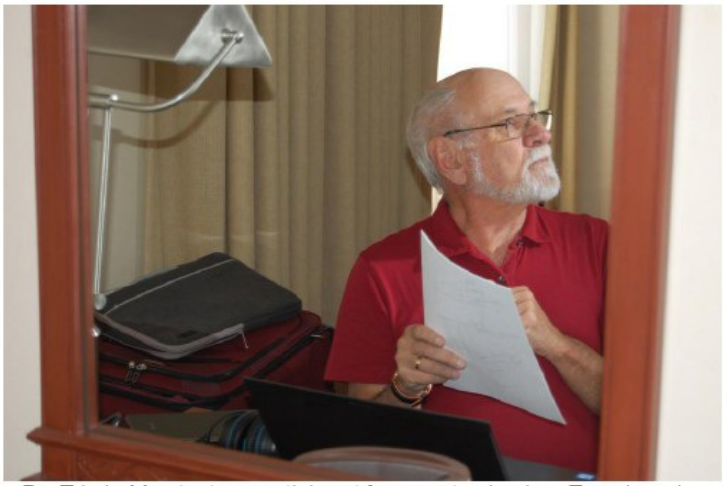

*Newsweek*

Filed Under: U.S., Pentagon, ESP, Psychics, CIA, spies, Parapsychology, U.S. Military

Steps from the Hayward Executive Airport in Northern California, a brunette in jeans and hiking boots scans her surroundings for police. She's carrying a 13-pound canister of liquid nitrogen in her hand. She unclasps the lid and dumps the colorless, minus-320-degree liquid into a beer cooler packed with 2,000 tiny aluminum balls. A thick white cloud erupts below the airport's control tower, a witch's brew that crackles and pops. Undetected, she darts back to her SUV and is gone.

Over the past two years, the same intruder has performed this clandestine ritual three dozen times across the San Francisco Bay Area. Without warning or permission, she's released nitrogen gas clouds in front of a fire station, a busy Catholic church, a water tower and a government center. She's smoke-bombed her way from Palo Alto to Alameda, spewing her cryogenic concoction in popular city parks and near lakes, highways and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) subway lines.

She's not a Satanic cultist or an incompetent terrorist. Arguably, her mission is even more improbable. It's all part of an experiment run by a former Pentagon scientist to prove the existence of extrasensory perception, or ESP.



*Dr. Edwin May tests a participant for remote viewing. Two decades after the CIA denounced the government's top-secret ESP program, May is trying to bring it back to life. Jim Popkin for Newsweek*

## Washington's Most Expensive Psychics

Twenty years ago this month, the CIA released a report with the unassuming title, "An Evaluation of Remote Viewing: Research and Applications." The 183-page white paper was more like a white flag—it was the CIA's public admission, after years of speculation, that U.S. government agencies had been using a type of ESP called "remote viewing" for more than two decades to help collect military and intelligence secrets. At a cost of about $20 million, the program had employed psychics to visualize hidden extremist training sites in Libya, describe new Soviet submarine designs and pinpoint the locations of U.S. hostages held by foreign kidnappers.



*Magician and scientific skeptic James Randi is pictured with Johnny Carson during 'The Amazing Randi' episode of The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson on November 3, 1987. Randi was a founding member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, now known as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, whose mission is to promote 'the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims.' Wendy Perl/NBC/NBCU Photo Bank/Getty*

experiments further compounds the problem of non-independence of the experiments," the report concluded.

Reached recently at his Oregon home, Hyman expresses a begrudging respect for his old adversary. "Smart guy, no question about it—he's talented," he says. The 87-year-old professor says that well-meaning researchers like May are trying to bring respect to a field burdened by strip-mall palm readers, 1-800 psychics and Star Gate alums on the Internet who now charge top dollar to purportedly game the stock market, discover the lost city of Atlantis and uncover the truth behind the Kennedy assassination. Yet Hyman believes even the most sincere and sophisticated efforts to prove the existence of ESP have all failed: "Having the window dressing of statistics, controls, double-blind, all that kind of stuff," he says, "doesn't make it science."

**An Interview With a Psychic Foot Soldier**

A few months ago at McMoneagle's home near Charlottesville, Virginia, May volunteers to conduct a live remote-viewing test for me, with his ace psychic at his side. "Joe, please access and describe a photograph you will see in about one or two minutes from now," May says.

McMoneagle sits still for 30 seconds and then begins sketching on a pad. From the comfort of his brown recliner, McMoneagle describes his drawing. "These squares are representative of buildings," he says. "And these buildings are kind of just scattered through here. So they're like embedded in a hillside. The roads are not very good roads; they're more like paths."

May asks for more. "Float up in the air a thousand feet—it's safe—whirl around 360 degrees and tell me what the gestalt of the area is like," he says.

"OK, you've got a large body of water. This is probably an island of some kind. Mountains up in here because the river goes up into the mountains. You've got a couple of bridges. This is a small village," McMoneagle adds.

Then May's laptop randomly selects two photographs and labels them Targets A and B. May flips a coin, and it comes up heads, which my teenage daughter had secretly decided beforehand would represent Target A.

May pulls out the Target A photograph for the big reveal...and it's a close-up of a giant

waterfall. There isn't a building, path, island, mountain, bridge or village in sight. Both men laugh. The test has been a failure. "I've never gotten a waterfall in my life," McMoneagle explains.

But May suggests some alternative theories. "There's a concept in statistics called nonstationary. What that means is the phenomenon comes and goes in unpredictable ways," he says. He adds that intention, attention and expectation always affect remote viewing, and "we violated virtually all three things in this particular trial."

Then Ed May pauses and offers his final explanation: "It was just a demo."

*Follow Jim Popkin on Twitter @JimPopkin*

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But the report, conducted for the CIA by the independent American Institutes for Research, did much more than confirm the existence of the highly classified program. It declared that the psychic-spy operation, code-named Star Gate, had been a bust. Yes, the CIA researchers had validated some Star Gate trials, finding that "hits occur more often than chance" and that "something beyond odd statistical hiccups is taking place." But the report declared that ESP was next to worthless for military use because the tips provided are too "vague and ambiguous" to produce actionable intelligence.

Like a Ouija board, the resulting news headlines seemed to write themselves. "End of Aura for CIA Mystics," *The Guardian* quipped. "Spooks See No Future for Pentagon Psychics," a Scottish paper reported. "Putting the 'ESP' Back Into Espionage," *BusinessWeek* added.

ABC News's *Nightline* also joined the fray, hosting a face-off between Robert Gates, the former CIA director, and Edwin May, the scientist who had been running the government's ESP research program. Gates struck first. "I don't know of a single instance where it is documented that this kind of activity contributed in any significant way to a policy decision, or even to informing policy makers about important information," he said. May fought back, citing "dramatic cases in the laboratory" in which Pentagon psychics had accurately sketched a target thousands of miles away that they had never actually seen.

That wasn't good enough, however. Already embarrassed and under pressure for the disclosure that one of their own, Aldrich Ames, had been spying for the Russians for a decade, the CIA officially shut down the psychic spies program. Star Gate had fizzled out.

It was November 1995, and May was out of a job. His life's work had been discredited by the CIA, and he had been humbled on national television. At 55, the trained scientist might have retreated to academia or simply walked away. Instead, he doubled down on ESP.

**A Jewish Hungarian Cowboy**

As a boy, May always seemed to stand out. Born in Boston, the Navy brat moved frequently, finally settling with his family after World War II on a ranch outside Tucson. "I grew up as a Jewish Hungarian cowboy in Arizona," he says, while digging into a plate of country ham at a tavern in Virginia. Fascinated with the Russian language, he taught himself the Cyrillic alphabet. He fell in love with physics at a local private boarding school and headed to college in New York. "I had a letter sweater in calf roping," he says. "The only guy at the University of Rochester with that."

May graduated in 1962 and began pursuing a doctoral degree. It didn't last long. "I flunked out of my first graduate school," he says. "Fell in with a bunch of fast nurses and learned to play a bagpipe."

His timing was unfortunate. The Vietnam War was ramping up, and the U.S. Army came calling. "It was more than a wakeup call. It straightened out my life," May says of nearly getting drafted. He enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh and buckled down, earning a Ph.D. in nuclear physics in four years. By 1968, with the counterculture movement raging, May had gone legit, authoring a thesis titled, "Nuclear Reaction Studies via the (Proton, Proton

Neutron) Reaction on Light Nuclei and the (Deuteron, Proton Neutron) Reaction on Medium to Heavy Nuclei."

May found post-doc work at the University of California, Davis, conducting tests with cyclotrons, but life outside the physics lab began exerting its own magnetic pull. "I moved to San Francisco," he recalls proudly. "As a professional hippie." In the Bay Area, May dropped out, attending trippy lectures on parapsychological research and experimenting with drugs. With the standard-issue beard and ponytail in place, he took off for India in search of the miraculous. May expected to "make Nobel Prize–winning discoveries of mind over matter," but he came home empty-handed. "I was unable to find a single psychic, whether street fakir or holy guru, who was able or willing to fit into my scientific framework," he wrote in *Psychic* magazine upon his return.



*An exterior view of the SRI International Building in Menlo Park, California, where May would conduct psychokinesis experiments. SRI International was founded as the Stanford Research institute in 1970. Unknown to May at the time, many of the projects were top secret and funded by the CIA. Michel Delluc/XPN-REA/Redux*

In 1975, May's career found him. A friend recommended him for a job at the prestigious Stanford Research Institute, now called SRI International, in Menlo Park. May would be conducting psychokinesis experiments. Unknown to him at the time, many of the projects were top secret and funded by the CIA.

Three years earlier, spooked by the Soviet Union's growing interest in parapsychology, the CIA had embraced ESP. At first, the Cold War–era tests were low-key, with CIA officials clumsily hiding objects in a box and asking a psychic to describe the contents. Soon the CIA got serious and ordered a $50,000 pilot study at the SRI, determined to see if psychics could use their remote-viewing skills to visualize and sketch large target sites in and around San Francisco.

Harold Puthoff, a laser physicist with a Ph.D. from Stanford University, was the program's first director. The CIA, he wrote, "watchful for possible chicanery, participated as remote viewers themselves in order to critique the protocols." The CIA officials drew seven sketches "of striking quality," Puthoff recalled, and "performed well under controlled laboratory conditions." Later, a psychic sitting in California visualized inside a secret National Security Agency listening post in West Virginia, right down to the words on file folders, according to Puthoff and a CIA official.

The CIA project director described the NSA-visualization results as "mixed" because the psychic nailed the code name for the site and its physical layout but botched the names of people working at the site. Nonetheless, interest from the U.S. intelligence community spiked. And when that same remote viewer—provided with only map coordinates and an atlas—

described new buildings and a massive construction crane hidden at a secret Soviet nuclear weapons facility (but got most other details wrong), multiple U.S. agencies began signing up for ESP studies.

A few years later, two psychologists at a New Zealand university had a premonition about Puthoff: They called him a bit of a rube. Writing in the journal *Nature*, the psychologists revealed that they had obtained transcripts of the original CIA experiments. The psychic who had seen deep inside the NSA outpost and the Soviet nuclear site had been fed “a large number of cues” from the judges over the years, they reported, and it was impossible to duplicate the uncanny results of his ESP testing. “Our own experiments on remote viewing under cue-free conditions have consistently failed to replicate the effect,” the psychologists concluded. Puthoff, who would also famously declare that spoon-bender and magician Uri Geller possessed psychic powers, disputed the psychologists’ findings and kept running the ESP program until 1985.

Although the CIA stopped funding ESP research in 1977, the Air Force, Army and Defense Intelligence Agency kept writing checks. The Army’s Fort Meade base in Maryland became the program’s secret operational home. In 1995, when Congress directed the CIA to evaluate remote viewing and either take over the program or cancel it for good, the DIA was at the helm. Congress bankrolled and protected the program for years. Well-known defenders included Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell and North Carolina Representative Charlie Rose, who once told an interviewer that "if the Russians have remote viewing, and we don't, we're in trouble."

A lesser-known supporter: Maine Senator William Cohen, who would later become the Secretary of Defense under President Bill Clinton. “I was impressed with the concept of remote viewing,” he tells *Newsweek* in an email. “The results may not have been consistent enough to constitute ‘actionable intelligence,’ but exploration of the power of the mind was and remains an important endeavor.”

To May, that’s an understatement.



*Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen is pictured during his appearance before the 9/11 commission on Capitol Hill on March 23, 2004. 'I was impressed with the*

**‘I believed it then, and I believe it now’**

To his admirers, May is a legitimate parapsychologist. To his critics, that phrase is the ultimate oxymoron. From 1985 to 1995, May served as the California-based research director of the Pentagon’s ESP program. A proton-probing scientist by training and a paranormal prophet by choosing, May was that rare specimen—a full-time ESP researcher with a salary and 401(k) plan courtesy of the U.S. government.

Thick of waist now with a shiny pate and white beard, he could pass for aging folk star Peter

concept of remote viewing,' Cohen tells 'Newsweek' in an email. Doug Mills/The New York Times/Redux

Yarrow. May has never met an aside he didn't like. Conversations come loaded with amusing chestnuts ("We'd answer the phone, 'Hello, Division of Parapsychology. May we tell you who's calling?'"), Washington gossip ("You know the Energy Department is run by Mormons?") and TMI ("I hung out with the Wicca community for a while"). But when the talk turns to nonbelievers who dismiss remote viewing as voodoo without examining the evidence, May is short-tempered. "I'm not going to deal with a skeptic who has no fucking idea about what he's talking about. Because he's just making it up. That's bad science. I'm a scientist." And May has even less time for all the former Star Gate psychics who peddle mood-ring junk science online, some warning paying customers about flying saucers and the coming apocalypse. "They are ripping people off, and I have to undo that when I try to sell this to mainstream scientists," he says.

So what is his scientific evidence? In 1995, when the CIA began preparing its program review, May provided the review team with results of 10 experiments he felt provided "the strongest evidence" to support "the remote-viewing phenomenon." The tests, with names like "AC lucid dream, pilot" and "ERD EEG investigation" detail the success rate of each experiment. One of the CIA reviewers, while clearly in the minority, was sold. "It is clear to this author that [ESP] is possible and has been demonstrated," she wrote in the agency's report. "This conclusion is not based on belief, but rather on commonly accepted scientific criteria."



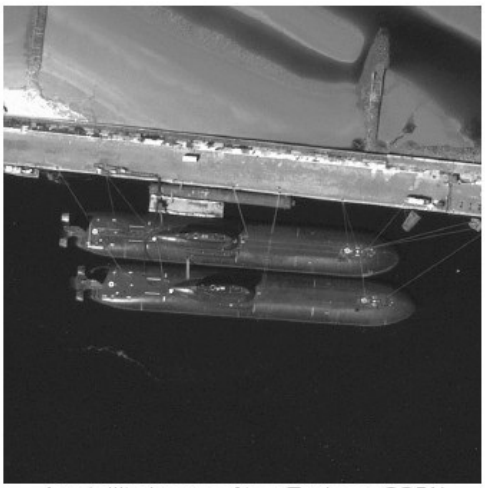
The CIA spent millions trying to develop psychics military spies, finally abandoning the project in the 1990s. Larry Lilac/Alamy

Today, May says ESP has "already been proved," and defends it like an impatient school teacher explaining gravity. He quickly offers a barrage of evidence and anecdotes to make his case. In a recent interview, May references an obscure presentation that the military's own remote-viewing project manager wrote in 1984 for his Army superiors. According to the now-declassified "secret" briefing, available online, the Army's Intelligence and Security Command had conducted "100 collection projects" using ESP since 1979 for a slew of government agencies including the CIA, NSA, FBI and Secret Service. Several of the projects involved the use of Army psychics to help locate Americans taken hostage by Iran in 1979. "Over 85% of our operational missions have produced accurate target information," states the briefing. "Even more significant, approximately 50% of the 760 missions produced usable intelligence."

May sees the Army report as confirmation that Gates was protecting the CIA when he declared on *Nightline* that remote viewing had never "contributed in any significant way" to U.S. intelligence efforts. "Gates lied," he tells *Newsweek*. "What more can I say?"

Gates, now a partner in the RiceHadleyGates consulting firm, wouldn't comment. But the author of the Army's 1984 report did. Brian Buzby was an Army lieutenant colonel when he briefly ran the Pentagon's ESP program in the 1980s. He's retired in Alabama now and has never spoken to the media before. He stands by his remote-viewing report. "I believed in it then, and I believe in it now," Buzby says. "It was a real thing, and it worked." Buzby says the program was just one low-cost tool that provided an additional source of intel for military and civilian analysts to weigh. When he learned the CIA had shut down the program, "I was disappointed that somebody wouldn't pick up the banner."

For May, further proof of the program's many wonders is Star Gate's legendary "Agent 001." The first psychic to work directly for the Pentagon, then–Army Chief Warrant Officer Joseph McMoneagle began remote viewing for the government in 1978. As a child, McMoneagle recalls sharing thoughts telepathically with his twin sister, and says he honed his ESP abilities as a soldier avoiding deadly attacks in Vietnam. May says McMoneagle could correctly identify a target "just under 50 percent" of the time when presented with five possible options. Using chance alone, he says the best outcome would be just 20 percent.



*A satellite image of two Typhoon SSBN submarines that Russia plans to scrap, pictured in Severodvinsk, Russia on May 28, 2013. DigitalGlobe/Getty*

May cites one intriguing example. It was 1979, and the National Security Council wanted help in "seeing" inside an unidentified industrial building near the Arctic Circle in Russia. McMoneagle began imagining himself "drifting down into the building" and had "an overwhelming sense" that he could see a submarine, "a really big one, with twin hulls." He made detailed drawings of the giant sub for the NSC. Only later, McMoneagle wrote in his 2002 memoir, did U.S. satellite photographs confirm the existence at the Soviet's secret Severodvinsk shipyard of a massive double-hulled Typhoon submarine, which constituted a new threat to American national security.

Upon retirement from the Army in 1984, McMoneagle was awarded the Legion of Merit. Given for exceptionally meritorious conduct, his award states that he served in a "unique intelligence project that is revolutionizing the intelligence community." It adds that he produced "critical intelligence unavailable from any other source" for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, DIA, NSA, CIA and Secret Service.

**Meeting a Millionaire**

For years after the government shut down its ESP program, May and McMoneagle tried to bring it back from the dead. They approached friendlies inside the U.S. agencies that had once funded them, "and they fled from us like you wouldn't believe," May says. He was "getting desperate, out of money," and then he met a millionaire.

The third-generation owner of a pharmaceutical empire, Luís Portela, was in a unique position to help. In 1924, Portela's grandfather opened a modest laboratory above the pharmacy where he worked in Porto, Portugal. Today, that business is called Bial, and it's the

largest pharmaceutical manufacturer in Portugal. Its products are sold in more than 50 countries on four continents. From an early age, Portela has been spellbound by the paranormal. In an email, he says he's always tried to understand why humanity and religion "accepted too easily some phenomena, so-called mysteries or miracles," while scientists "denied those phenomena, claiming that they did not exist." So in 1994, Portela set up the nonprofit Bial Foundation to study ESP and "the human being from both the physical and spiritual perspectives."

It's a radical concept for such a conservative industry. Imagine Johnson & Johnson financing crystal healing. The Bial Foundation has funded more than 500 projects in 25 countries, including dozens of ESP studies and even research into ghost sightings and belief in UFOs. May has been a frequent Bial recipient, collecting about $400,000 in research funds for nine ESP-related projects. In the process, Portela has become a fanboy, believing the controversial scientist has helped "foster the understanding of the human being."



*Liquid nitrogen disperses into the air after May's assistant poured it out near Hayward Airport in California. May believes the mist acts as a homing beacon for psychics. Lory Hawley for Newsweek*

Funded by the Bial Foundation at a cost of $45,000, May's latest ESP study "is probably the best experiment in the history of the field," the Star Gate researcher says. The goal: to test whether "changes of thermodynamic entropy at a remote natural site enhance the quality of the anomalous cognition." That's a two-dollar way of asking whether a sudden release of thermal energy, like a rocket launch or a liquid nitrogen eruption in a beer cooler, can improve a psychic's ability to perceive what's happening at the site from thousands of miles away. "This wasn't something that we just pulled out of our rear ends," May explains. "It was really all the spying stuff we did for the government, where we discovered that when targets involve large changes of thermodynamic entropy, like underground nukes, accelerators, electromagnetic pulse devices and so on, they work much better" in signaling remote viewers.

To conduct the ESP-improvement experiment, May reassembled his old A-team. Out of rural Virginia, there's McMoneagle, the former Army intelligence officer who won the Legion of Merit. Then there's Nevin Lantz, a former Star Gate researcher who works today as a Palo Alto psychotherapist and "authentic happiness coach." And finally there's Angela Dellafiora Ford, a former Star Gate psychic and DIA intelligence analyst from Maryland who markets herself as a "medium that can help people connect with their spirit guides as well as communicate with their loved ones on the other side."

Ford was one of only a half-dozen women who worked as psychics for the government's program. Some of her military colleagues derided her because three "spirit guides" would possess her mind during Star Gate remote-viewing sessions and guide her observations. One was a fat cherub, another a boy-like angel and the last a 17th-century British professor who spoke through her, Ford says. In an interview, she also says she once saw a UFO outside her suburban home in 2010. "It reminded me of something like they call the mother

ship," she says. "It was not moving. It was hovering...and then it sort of disappeared."



*Senate Appropriations Chairman Robert C. Byrd looks over notes on Capitol Hill in Washington on May 15, 2008. Maine Senator William Cohen, who served as Secretary of Defense under President Bill Clinton, says Senator Byrd was a supporter of the Star Gate program. Scott J. Ferrell/Congressional Quarterly/Getty*

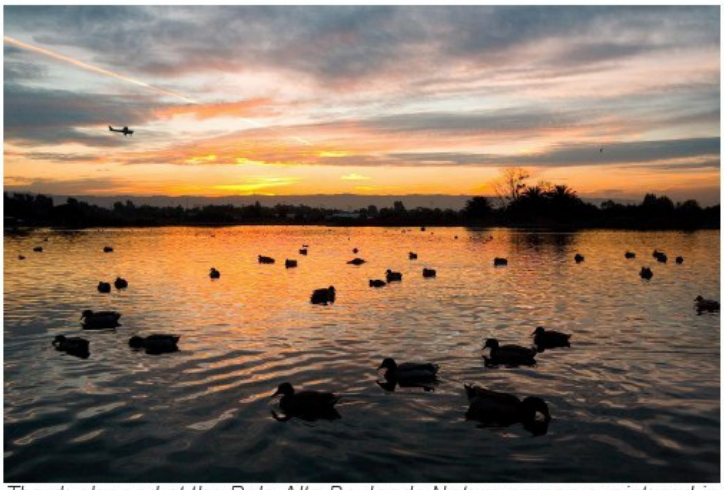
Regardless of her unorthodox methods and beliefs, Ford also has her admirers. One of them is Cohen, the former senator and secretary of defense. He first got to know Ford when he was on the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, which helped fund Star Gate even when the Defense Department lost interest. Ford conducted psychic readings for Cohen when was he was a senator, and he remains a true believer. "I did support the Star Gate program, as did Senator Robert Byrd and other members of the committee," Cohen says in an email. "There seemed to be a small segment of people who were able to key into a different level of consciousness. Angela Ford was one of them. It doesn't mean that she or any of the others in the Star Gate program possessed psychic powers that could predict the future or peer into the past and retrieve lost information. But there were a number of remote-viewing tests conducted that I found impressive."

With Ford, Lantz and McMoneagle back on the job, May began work on his ESP 2.0 experiment. The first step was to design protocols and choose 22 distinct Bay Area outdoor locations near his private Cognitive Sciences Laboratory in Palo Alto. Sites included the Hayward Executive Airport, a BART overpass in Union City, the Palo Alto Duck Pond and the Pulgas Ridge Preserve in Redwood City. Next, May would fire up his Sony Vaio laptop and ask the computer to randomly select one of the target sites. May and the remote viewers would not know the result. The computer would also generate a text message to inform May's assistant—the mysterious brunette, a former waitress named Lory Hawley—where to drive and whether she would create a mini liquid nitrogen eruption. Again, May and the psychics were not told the result.

May worked with the psychics, one at a time, in a quiet room. He placed a blindfold over each psychic's eyes and then said: "Please access and describe the first thing you see when we remove the blindfold" in a half-hour or so. After getting into a relaxed or trance-like state, the remote viewer then described exactly what he or she "saw" at the Bay Area location. May then entered the psychic's descriptions into his laptop, assigning a number value for each water feature, man-made structure and other physical element described. Finally, the computer determined the accuracy of each remote-viewing session.

For these tests in California, May drove the psychics to the site the computer had selected and then told them to remove their blindfolds. But many other times, May conducted the experiment using locations thousands of miles away, in Maryland or Virginia, in hotel rooms

or McMoneagle's den. In those cases, May held up a photo of the correct target site for the psychic to see once they had described their vision.



*The duck pond at the Palo Alto Baylands Nature preserve, pictured in 2008. The duck pond was one of 22 locations May selected for his ESP 2.0 experiment. Dan Sullivan/Alamy*

The old Star Gate psychics recently completed 72 trials, with May's assistant pouring liquid nitrogen 36 times. In his final report to Bial, May declared victory, finding "a significant effect supporting the study hypothesis (zdiff = 1.80, p = .036, ES = 0.425 ± 0.236)." Translation: Liquid nitrogen works. The sudden release of energy acts as a flare in the dark, May believes, helping psychics to see across the country and even into the future. "I think it's very important," he says of this unpublished study. "If it holds up, it will be a breakthrough."

**You Can't Bullshit a Bullshitter**

Chances are, Ray Hyman won't see it that way. A professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Oregon, Hyman is one of the nation's leading skeptics about the paranormal. Along with his friend James Randi, aka the Amazing Randi, he's a founding member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, now known as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, whose mission is to promote "the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims." As a scientist and former magician and mentalist, he's a living embodiment of the "You can't bullshit a bullshitter" maxim. Hyman and his skeptic kin are deeply suspicious of parapsychology and other phenomena they can't prove, including man's ability to walk through walls, become invisible, stop animal hearts through intense staring or any of the other wacky ideas embraced by Pentagon officials in the '70s and '80s and lampooned in the book and movie *The Men Who Stare at Goats* .

Hyman and May first met at the SRI in the 1970s, and originally the skeptic was encouraged. Sent by the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency to the institute to observe illusionist Geller—"just a charming con artist" — Hyman grew to respect May's scientific rigor and ethics. They agreed that the early SRI research was "crap," Hyman says, providing way too many clues to the psychics and fudging the results.

But when May began running the ESP program, Hyman says, he also created protocol problems. May became the only arbiter of whether a psychic had accurately described a target. "The only judge who could make it work was Ed May," Hyman says. "That's a no-no."

So in 1995, when the CIA selected Hyman to help evaluate the Star Gate program, the automatic writing was on the wall. Although the famous debunker was paired with a known ESP proponent, Hyman's views prevailed. The final CIA report chastised May for serving as both judge and jury on virtually all the ESP tests. "The use of the same judge across




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# More Sharknado than science: Why Shark Week has become a bottom feeder

*More Joanna Rothkopf.*
*Monday, Aug 11, 2014 03:35 PM PDT*

salon.com

**Shark Week no longer claims to be science-based, but do we still have a right to be outraged that it isn't?**

Joanna Rothkopf

Topics: shark week, Science, Discovery Channel, Sustainability News, Media News, Entertainment News



*Enlarge*

Great White Shark (Carcharodon carcharias) breaching in an attack on seal (Credit: Sergey Uryadnikov via Shutterstock)

Shark Week, Discovery Channel's week of block programming devoted to the famous marine predator, is now officially the longest-running cable event in history. It has garnered spoofs and adoration, from Comedy Central's Shart Week to "30 Rock's" Tracy Jordan giving the immortal advice: "Live every week like it's Shark Week."

But with all its hype, the tradition has received fervent criticism for its penchant for the gruesome and sensational, while all but neglecting scientific truth.

The 2013 piece "Megalodon: The Monster Shark that Lives" was the first to really rile dissenters. The show followed a troop of explorers attempting to prove the existence of the *Carcharocles megalodon*, a prehistoric 50-foot-long shark that had allegedly been wreaking havoc throughout the high seas. It was complete fiction. It also saw 4.8 million viewers, the largest audience of any show in the history of Discovery's programming. In response to enormous backlash, Shark Week's executive producer Michael Sorensen said in a statement, "It's one of the most debated shark discussions of all time [it isn't], can Megalodon exist today [it can't]? It's Ultimate Shark Week fantasy. The stories have been out there for years, and with 95 percent of the ocean unexplored, who really knows? [Everyone. We all know.]"

The original airing featured three disclaimers, including one that read, "None of the institutions or agencies that appear in the film are affiliated with it in any way, nor have approved its contents." So are we wrong to feel outraged that it was all fiction? Even though

they were [kind of] clear about it?

In a blog post on National Geographic, Brian Switek argues that our outrage is warranted:

> Discovery built its reputation with science programming. Shark Week was always a high point. There was no part of the summer I looked forward to more. As a kid, I was hooked by shows that gave shark experts such as Eugenie Clark, John McCosker, and Samuel Gruber full attention as the researchers rhapsodized about the selachian subjects of their scientific fascination…But now Discovery is a joke, with the megalodon fiasco only being a confirmation of what has been clear for some time.

It's as if the New York Times' front page suddenly forayed into fiction. How were we supposed to know they had decided to change their mission?

This year's Shark Week programming, which premiered on Sunday evening, follows in the footsteps of "Megalodon" — with lots of gore and hearsay, but not much science. Only two programs (out of 29) actually feature scientists in the description, and all the others focus on mythical killing machines, which most certainly do not exist. The event has even sparked a bevy of restaurants offering shark meat promotions, to the total dismay of real conservationists and researchers.

Even when trustworthy authorities do appear on Shark Week, we can't trust that they endorse the message of whatever show they are on. According to io9, scientists have been lied to by Shark Week producers to get them to appear in various specials. Jonathan Davis was studying bull sharks for his master's thesis, when he was approached by producers: "I asked a few of the crew members, including the producer, what the show was going to be about … I was just told it would be combined with some other filming to make one show about Louisiana shark research." It was actually featured in something called "Voodoo Shark," about a mythical monster that lived in the Louisiana Bayous.

In an interview with the Atlantic's Ashley Fetters, Shark Week's former executive producer Brooke Runnette outlined Shark Week's programming strategy:

> To a large extent, she says, the ominous tones and the imminent danger are still what draws viewers to Shark Week. In the past 25 years, Runnette and her team managed to isolate "what works" into a neat, distilled list of elements: "The shark is the star. Just keep showing that. Don't give too much reason to worry. Make sure we stay outside, because it's summertime, and everybody wants to see the colors and the light outside. You don't want to be inside talking to people; if anything, you want to be outside talking to people. Just be in the water, with the shark; or be out on the boat, with the shark."

It's a classic story of modern media — when clicks and views mean success, accuracy and quality become unnecessary bonuses. We just need to stop being surprised when it happens.

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Thursday Nov 05, 2015
2015-11-05 09:41Xinhua*Editor: Gu Liping*




*Photo taken on Aug. 4, 2015 shows an archaeologist clearing Wuzhu coins, the common currency in wide circulation during the West Han Dynasty (206 B.C.--25 A.D.), at the excavation site of royal tombs of Marquis of Haihun State, which date back to over 2,000 years ago, in Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province. (Photo: Xinhua/Wan Xiang)*

Photo taken on Aug. 4, 2015 shows an archaeologist clearing Wuzhu coins, the common currency in wide circulation during the West Han Dynasty (206 B.C.--25 A.D.), at the excavation site of royal tombs of Marquis of Haihun State, which date back to over 2,000 years ago, in Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province. (Photo: Xinhua/Wan Xiang)

Chinese archeologists announced Wednesday the discovery of the most complete Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- 25 A.D.) cemetery.

The Haihunhou cemetery is located a kilometer from the nearest village in Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province. It covers some 40,000 square meters with eight tombs and a chariot burial site with walls that stretch for almost 900 meters.

Archeologists suspect that the main tomb is that of Liu He, grandson of Emperor Wu, the greatest ruler of Han Dynasty, one of the most prosperous periods in China's history. Liu was given the title "Haihunhou" (Marquis of Haihun) after he was deposed as emperor after only 27 days, dethroned by the royal clan because of his lack of talent and morals. Haihun is the ancient name of a very small kingdom in the north of Jiangxi.

Xu Changqing, director of Jiangxi provincial cultural relics research institute, said on Wednesday that the cemetery is the most complete and best preserved Han Dynasty tomb cluster ever discovered. Archeologists can clearly see the foundations of the tombs thought to be of Haihunhou and his wife, as well as affiliated memorial temples. There are roads and drainage systems in the cemetery.

The team have found more than 10 tonnes of Wuzhu bronze coins together with more than 10,000 other gold, bronze and iron items, unearthed along with jade articles, wood tablets and bamboo slips, said Xin Lixiang of the China National Museum, who heads the team at the site. Xin has studied some 4,000 Han Dynasty tombs.

Xin said the next stage of the archeological work will be to look for items locked in the coffin of the central mausoleum.

"There may be a royal seal and jade clothes that will suggest the status and identity of the tombs occupant," he said.

The team have recovered many musical instruments such as chimes, se (a 25-stringed plucked instrument), panflutes and sheng (a reed pipe wind instrument), as well as terracotta figurines showing how the instruments were played.

It is also the only tomb excavated in south of Yangtze River with real vehicles. "The chariot burial is an important part of the tomb," Xu said. Five well-preserved horse-drawn vehicles have been found, each with four sacrificed horses, and more than 3,000 accessories embellished with gold and silver. "The discovery will be important for the study of hierarchical burial customs and articles used in burial," he said.

Tombs of some other aristocrats have led the team to believe that the dig may be the site of the capital of the Haihun Kingdom. The entire site covers five square kilometers.

"The discovery can help us understand the social, economic and cultural status in Western Han Dynasty, and even the development of music, transportation, metrology, and the evolution of Chinese characters and arts," Xu said.

Li Xiaojie, vice minister of culture and director of the State Bureau of Cultural Relics, has ordered that work of the cemetery should be aimed at applying for UNESCO's world heritage listing.

Jiangxi's cultural department use high-tech sampling and recording to document information and data. Several labs and research teams have been set up to work separately on archaeobotany, zooarchaeology as well as studies on textiles, metals and historical records.

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# Ancient mummified hand hidden in wall of Yorkshire cottage 'has power to entrance humans'

express.co.uk

**THIS ghastly mummified human hand, discovered hidden in the wall of a thatched cottage in Castleton, North Yorkshire, is the only known Hand of Glory still in existence.**

By Jenny Paschall
PUBLISHED: 17:19, Tue, Oct 27, 2015 | UPDATED: 19:47, Tue, Oct 27, 2015



*Beyond Belief Archive*

A Hand of Glory is the preserved hand of a hanged convict, which was believed to have unique magical properties.

The preparation of such a grizzly souvenir was complicated. First, the hand of an executed felon had to be cut off while the body was still hanging from the gallows. The worse the crime, the more effective the magic.

Once the blood was drained, the hand was wrapped in a cloth (preferably the winding sheet of a freshly buried corpse) and, according to an old recipe: 'pickled in salt, and the urine of man, woman, dog, horse and mare; smoked with herbs and hay for a month; hung on an oak tree for three nights running, then laid at a crossroads, then hung on a church door for one night'.



*Beyond Belief Archive*

Finally, either the fingers were dipped in the fat of a gibbeted felon, or a candle from the same ingredient was placed in the hand.

Once it was ready, the hand was used by burglars to make their work easy and safe by ensuring their victims fell into a deep supernatural sleep. The candle was lit and, as the villains entered the property - now illuminated by the glow from the burning hand of glory - they chanted the following:

*Let those who rest more deeply sleep,*

*Let those awake their vigils keep,*

*O Hand of Glory, shed thy light,*

*Direct us to our spoil tonight.*



*Beyond Belief Archive*

The magical qualities of the hand would enable the thieves to creep through the sleeping household, take all the swag they could carry, and make their getaway undisturbed.

In Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Draco Malfoy sees a Hand of Glory in Borgin and Burkes, the dark arts specialist shop. He is told that it "gives light only to the holder". Draco later buys the hand and uses it in Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince.

17 Comments
albiedunn6 hours ago
Oh NO ! they have found the-mother -in -law
Medusa10919 hours ago
It never ceases to amaze me what the human mind has managed to conjure up over the centuries, what is sanity?
Peterboroughboy2 days ago
Clearly they need a hand up...
Gish2 days ago
I have a Hand of Morning Glory when the lady's not about...
Bulldog2 days ago
someone obviously lent a hand...
Miss Floribunda Rose3 days ago
See on You Tube "Beasts Baby 1976". Baby is an episode from Beasts, a series from 1976. In it, something is found hidden in the wall of a country cottage.....it is extremely spooky, and well worth watching. The end will make you freeze with terror!
Magnacarta3 days ago
Looks like the hand of Blair. Probably j e r k e d off plenty of Saudi princes with it for money.
kuyafrank3 days ago
What a load of cobblers!
Teddy Bear3 days ago
According to old European beliefs, a candle made of the fat from a malefactor who died on the gallows, lighted, and placed (as if in a candlestick) in the Hand of Glory, which comes from the same man as the fat in the candle, this would render motionless all persons to whom it was presented. The method for holding the candle is sketched in Petit Albert. The candle could be put out only with milk. In another version, the hair of the dead man is used as a wick, and the candle would give light only to the holder. The Hand of Glory also purportedly had the power to unlock any door it came across

Miss Floribunda Rose3 days ago
A Hand of Glory appears in The Wicker Man, one of my favourite films.
Peterboroughboy3 days ago
Oh dear...another load of tosh.. Be aware, the dead arnt
a problem..only the living..now where is the tory party.....
Spartan Man 53 days ago
Primitive witchcraft.
Velocette3 days ago
Saw it years ago at the museum in Whitby.
Cooterman3 days ago
Isn't the thumb too long ?
Miss Floribunda Rose3 days ago
Too long for what?
Emperors New Clothes3 days ago
I suppose you'll have to go to the second hand shop to get the other one.
Saturday, 31st October 2015
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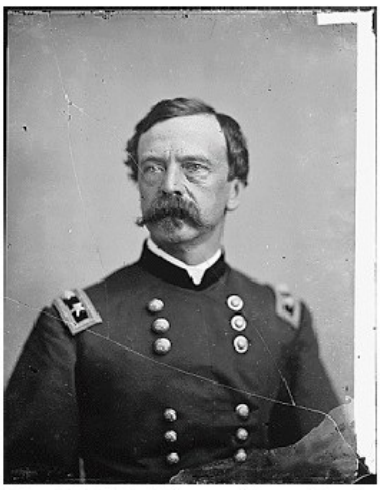
**Tuesday, February 19, 2013**

## LEGALLY INSANE
### Murder & Daniel Sickles

On this date, February 19, 1859, one of the most colorful and eccentric politicians and Civil War generals in American history, Daniel Sickles, was cleared of murder charges. But his defense was a novel one – and like nothing that American courts had ever heard before. It seems that the respected politician murdered his wife's young lover because he was insane at the time. It was the first time that such a defense had ever been attempted in the United States and bizarrely, it worked.

By 1959, murder had already become sadly commonplace in Washington, D.C. so it was rare when a single homicide attracted much attention -- unless that homicide involved a well-known congressman, a famous composer's son and an attempted cover-up by the president of the United States. With those elements combined, it's no wonder that Washington society was stunned in February 1859 when they heard of a murder that occurred in wealthy Lafayette Square.

The scandalous event involved Representative Daniel Sickles of New York and his friend, Phillip Barton Key, the son of "Star-Spangled Banner" composer Francis Scott Key. Sickles murdered Key in broad daylight, practically in front of the White House, with a number of witnesses present. But thanks to some help from President James Buchanan and the new legal defense of "temporary insanity", he got away with it.



**Daniel Sickles – Legally Insane**

Sickles was well-known in Washington. He was married to the beautiful daughter of an Italian music teacher and his wife, Theresa, was described as being charming and well-educated, along with being very attractive. After his marriage, Sickles worked in London for the Foreign Service for a short time and then was involved in the election campaign of President James

Buchanan. He and his wife moved into their home on Lafayette Square and became a major part of Washington's elite society. Twice weekly they entertained the influential of Washington and the house became the center of both social and political circles.

Sickles later succeeded in winning back his congressional seat in New York and this caused him to start spending a lot of time away from home, leaving his wife, who had been just 17 when they married, to fend for herself. While Sickles was away, Theresa began being spotted in the company of handsome widower Phillip Barton Key.



**Theresa Sickles**

Everyone in Washington was soon talking about the affair, which was not carried out very discreetly. Key even rented his own house in Lafayette Square, just a block away from the Sickles home, so that they could get together as often as they liked. Rumor had it that they met at least three times each day. Key would stand in the park in front of Theresa's home and wave his handkerchief at her whenever he wanted to meet.

Sickles missed all of the signs of the affair, which had started on a sofa in his own parlor. Meanwhile, Key grew even bolder, ignoring warnings of violence that could result if the affair was found out. He boasted that he carried a weapon in his pocket, just in case.



**Phillip Barton Key**

Gossip about an improper relationship between Theresa and Key eventually made its way to Sickle but it was an anonymous note that convinced him of the affair. The note, which had been slipped under his door read, in part:
"I do assure you, [Key] has as much use of your wife as you have."

Sickles investigated and found that the allegations were true. According to House clerk George Woodridge, the revelation "unmanned him completely." The congressman's "exhibitions of grief" were so violent that Woodridge assisted him in retreating to a private room near the House chamber to avoid a public scene. Ironically, Sickles himself was not above scandalous accusations. He was censured by the New York State Assembly for escorting a known prostitute, Fanny White, into its chambers. He also reportedly took her to England, leaving his pregnant wife at home, and presented White to Queen Victoria, using as her alias the surname of a New York political opponent.

But his wife's affair unhinged him. He was enraged and distraught over the affair. He went home and confronted Theresa with what he knew. That same evening, she wrote a long and detailed confession, which was very explicit for those prudish times. She implored her husband to "spare her," which Sickles did, but only after she signed the confession in front of two witnesses. That night, Theresa slept on the floor of her friend Octavia's room, while Sickles stayed in the bedroom. Servants later told of hearing sobbing coming from both bedrooms that night. Sickles told a friend the next day: "I am a dishonored and ruined man".

The next morning, Phillip Key, not realizing that the affair had been found out, walked past the Sickles house and waved his handkerchief at the window. When Theresa failed to respond to his signal, he left, but came back and tried again later on in the day. On his third trip to the park, Key was met by the Sickles' dog, which ran out of the house when he saw him. Key made a show of playing with the dog, waving his handkerchief the entire time.

Sickles, however, had seen the less than subtle signals and shouted at George Woolridge and another visitor, Samuel Butterworth: "That villain has just passed my house!" Butterworth tried to placate his friend, arguing that a public scene would only provide more gossip about the affair. Sickles brushed him off, stating that the whole town knew of it anyway. By now, the congressman was well past reason and hardly concerned about appearances.

Arming himself with two derringers, Sickles rushed out of the house and into the park. He screamed at Key: "Key, you scoundrel! You have dishonored my house -- you must die!"

As Key thrust his hand into his jacket, Sickles fired but the shot only grazed the other man. Sickles raised his hand to fire again and Key grabbed by him the collar of his coat. As they struggled, the gun fell to the ground. Sickles pulled away from him and drew the second gun. Key pleaded with him: "Don't murder me!" Then, he threw a pair of opera glasses at Sickles as a desperate attempt to ward off his attacker.

Sickles was undeterred and fired again. This time, the bullet struck Key, penetrating near his groin. Key murmured that he was shot and collapsed against a tree. Sickles stood over him and pulled the trigger again. The gun misfired. As Key cried in desperation, Sickles calmly re-loaded the derringer and pressed it close to his former friend's chest. He fired again and this time, the shot was fatal. Even so, Sickles was still not finished. He placed the muzzle against Key's head and again, pulled the trigger. It misfired again and he stepped away.

Thomas Martin, a Treasury Department clerk, had witnessed the murder and he ran to the scene. Sickles turned to him and asked: "Is the scoundrel dead?"

Several men picked up Key's body and carried him to a nearby house, where he died a short time later. As he watched them go, Sickles stood at the edge of the park and mumbled the same phrase over and over again: "He violated my bed."

Sickles turned himself into the authorities immediately after the murder. At about the same time, President Buchanan received news about the incident from a young page, J.H.W. Bonitz, who had witnessed it. After hearing the report, Buchanan lied to Bonitz to try and protect his friend. He told the page that he should get out of town right away. Otherwise, he might be jailed and held without bond as a witness to the crime. Apparently, the president was unaware that others had witnessed the murder too, but his tactic worked on Bonitz. The page took some money that was offered to him by Buchanan and left Washington on the first train.

Before he was taken to jail, Sickles was permitted to make a short visit to his home. A large crowd was gathered outside, hoping for a glimpse of the famous killer. He was escorted inside and he found Theresa lying on the bedroom floor, stricken with grief. He uttered only once sentence to her before he left: "I've killed him."

News of the murder spread throughout the city and dominated newspaper headlines for days to come. Editorials were written that inflated the importance of the killing, stating that it reflected the moral decay of society in general and more specifically, the increasing lawless conditions of Washington.

Sickles was indicted for murder and his trial was a spectacular one. He hired eight of the nation's most prestigious lawyers to defend him, including Edwin Stanton, who would later become Lincoln's Secretary of War. The prosecution was hampered from the beginning. Robert Ould, who was appointed by President Buchanan to replace Phillip Key as Washington's district attorney, was an inexperienced lawyer and incapable of handling such a complicated case. Despite pleas from the Key family (the president was still trying to help Sickles), Buchanan refused to replace him.

The courtroom was crammed with curious spectators when the trial began and people outside peered in the windows, hoping to catch a look at the proceedings. The case itself should have been simple. Sickles stalked and killed Key in an act of "remorseless revenge" and had done the deed in the open with plenty of people watching. He was obviously guilty of

the crime with which he had been charged.

But the defense complicated the case by arguing that Sickles had been temporality insane at the time of the murder, and that Key's defilement of his wife had made him that way. The insanity defense had been well-established in American courtrooms but, at that time, there was no precedent for what the defense called an "irresistible impulse." Sickles, his counsel attested, had acted in a "transport of frenzy" that was fleeting in nature. He could not resist this impulse and acted in a manner that could not be stopped. For this reason, they said, he was not guilty of the crime. The jury agreed and after deliberating for less than an hour, Sickles was acquitted.

The verdict was followed by a spontaneous celebration in the streets of Washington, including a parade that was led by the U.S. Marine Band. Sickles was not exactly proclaimed a hero but his actions were certainly understood by most. They believed that Sickles had a right to stand up for his honor and one of the jurors in his trial, William Hopkins, even told newspapers: "I would not have been satisfied with a derringer or a revolver, but would have brought a howitzer to bear on the seducer."

Sickles had been grievously wronged and the public was prepared to welcome him back to his proper place in society. But then Sickles did the unthinkable --- he reconciled with his wife.

All of the goodwill that had followed the trial suddenly vanished and the public was in an uproar. Newspapers turned against him, as did many of his friends. Sickles was not ruined by the murder, but for forgiving his wife. Public reaction was so angry that Sickles was compelled to justify himself in a lengthy newspaper statement that was reprinted all over the country. In the letter, he made no apologies for murdering Key and for taking back Theresa. Instead, he appealed for the right to conduct his personal family life in private. The open letter did little good. Sickles was considered a joke and was ostracized by his fellow members of Congress. Despised and the object of ridicule, Sickles decided not to run for re-election. But his colorful career was far from over.

When the Civil War began, Sickles raised a contingent of men from New York and organized them for battle. His patriotism so impressed President Lincoln that he assured Sickles a position after the war. He managed to wrangle a commission and rose to the rank of major general. At Gettysburg, Sickles continued his controversial career by gloriously disobeying orders. He decided to move his corps forward from its assigned position in General Meade's "fish-hook" across the battlefield. This jeopardized the entire Union line at the same time that Longstreet's Confederates were moving to attack the very place that Sickles had been ordered to hold.



**Daniel Sickles' shattered leg – and the cannonball that took it – at the Army's National Medical Museum**

During the battle, Sickles' right leg was hit and horribly mangled by a cannonball. On his way to the field hospital, where the leg would be amputated, Sickles calmly sipped wine and smoked a cigar. The wound ended his active service but he displayed the stump of his leg as a sign of his valor and heroism. In fact, he was so proud of his wound that he donated the shattered leg to the Army's National Medical Museum, where it remains on display today. For years after, he visited the leg on the anniversary of its removal.

Despite his one-legged disability, Sickles remained in the army until the end of the war and was disgusted that Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant would not allow him to return to a combat command. In 1867, he received appointments as brevet brigadier general and major general in the regular army for his services at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg, respectively.



**A photograph of Sickles and his staff after Gettysburg**

When the war ended, President Andrew Johnson kept Lincoln's promise to find Sickles a position in government and appointed him military governor over the Carolinas during Reconstruction. Sickles described his new position: "I am a sort of Sultan, a sort of Roman consul. I was not only the military commander, I was the Governor of these two states; I was the Court of Chancery of these two states. I was a sort of Poobah."

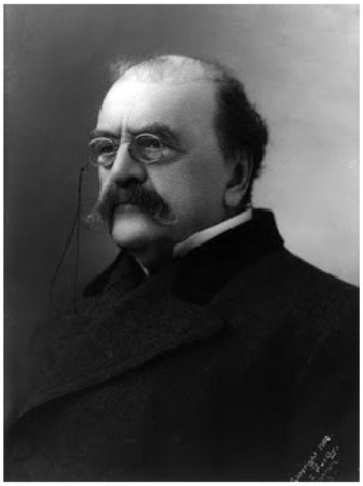
Soon after the close of the Civil War, in 1865, he was sent on a confidential mission to

Colombia to secure its compliance with a treaty agreement of 1846 permitting the United States to convey troops across the Isthmus of Panama. From 1865 to 1867, he commanded the Department of South Carolina, the Department of the Carolinas, the Department of the South, and the Second Military District. In 1866, he was appointed colonel of the 42nd U.S. Infantry (Veteran Reserve Corps), and in 1869 he was retired with the rank of major general.

Sickles served as U.S. Minister to Spain from 1869 to 1874, after the Senate failed to confirm Henry Shelton Sanford to the post, and took part in a controversial affair that almost had the U.S. in a war with Spain. His inaccurate and emotional messages to Washington promoted war, until he was overruled by Secretary of State Hamilton Fish and the war scare died out.

In 1867, Theresa Sickles died at the age of 31. General Sickles remarried four years later to Carolina Creash, whom he had met while serving as the “Yankee King of Spain,” as he called it. He was forced to resign in 1873, but not before reportedly carrying on a steamy affair with the deposed Queen Isabella II.

Not surprisingly, his second marriage was a disaster and he and his wife were estranged for almost 30 years when she refused to return with him to the United States. Sickles managed to stay busy, though. He was president of the New York State Board of Civil Service Commissioners from 1888 to 1889, sheriff of New York in 1890, and again a representative in the 53rd Congress from 1893 to 1895. For most of his postwar life, he was the chairman of the New York Monuments Commission, but he was forced out when $27,000 was found to have been embezzled.



**Daniel Sickles in 1902**

He had an important part in efforts to preserve the Gettysburg Battlefield, sponsoring legislation to form the Gettysburg National Military Park, buy up private lands, and erect monuments. One of his contributions was procuring the original fencing used on East Cemetery Hill to mark the park's borders. This fencing came directly from Lafayette Square in Washington, D.C. – where he had killed Phillip Barton Key.

Of the principal senior generals who fought at Gettysburg, virtually all, with the conspicuous exception of Sickles, have been memorialized with statues at Gettysburg. When asked why

there was no memorial to him, Sickles supposedly said, "The entire battlefield is a memorial to Dan Sickles." However, there was, in fact, a memorial commissioned to include a bust of Sickles, the monument to the New York Excelsior Brigade. It was rumored that the money appropriated for the bust was stolen by Sickles himself; the monument is displayed in the Peach Orchard with a figure of an eagle instead of Sickles' likeness.

Sickles lived out the remainder of his life in New York City and was said to still be a womanizer in his old age. He died on May 3, 1914 at the age of 94. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery – except for that one leg, of course. It's still on display at the National Medical Museum.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:20 AM

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The author's handwritten notes on the famous novel "Dracula" are on display for Halloween.

*by* Erin Moran 27 October 2015

Modern vampires are often found in middle school romance novels and cable dramas, but this month the origins of the cultural phenomenon reside at the Rosenbach Museum of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Bram Stoker's original handwritten notes from his classic Gothic horror novel, "Dracula," are currently housed at the Rosenbach. This month, as part of the Hands-On Tours series, the museum is offering guests an exclusive look at pages of Stoker's research notes and outlines for his most famous novel, as well as a copy of the first edition.

The tour this Friday will allow participants to interact with Stoker's notes under the guidance of a member of the Rosenbach collections or education staff.

Elizabeth Fuller, a librarian at the Rosenbach, said the museum has about 120 pages of Stoker's notes, dated from as early as 1890 to 1897, just before the book was published. The documents include outlines for the book, notes regarding the content of each chapter, notes from Stoker's visit to Whitby—where part of the book takes place, lists of characters and vampire characteristics, notes from his research and a log of the novel's events.

"They document Stoker's process in writing the novel," Fuller said. "The sources of many of his ideas, the way he shaped and re-shaped its structure and the characters and events he considered but decided not to put in."

Fuller said the exact pages featured in the tour will vary, "partly to avoid exposing the same pages to light and handling all the time, partly because some pages are at times in use for exhibitions or research, and partly just based on what the presenting staff member finds most interesting at the moment. There's so much in them we can never say it all every time, so we like to change it up periodically."

Presenting staff members try to include pages from all of the different categories of notes they have available, so guests can expect to see everything from general outlines to notes about early vampire books and articles that Stoker used for inspiration.

While Stoker did not invent the vampire, "Dracula" defined modern vampire fiction and influenced the horror genre in the literary, film and theatrical worlds.

Stoker's notes provide a glimpse into the creation of the modern vampire.

"[The notes] show how he gathered ideas for his vampire not only from the traditional vampire lore of Eastern Europe, but from descriptions of other supernatural beings at far distant times and places," Fuller said.

According to Fuller, the notes, as well as other items from Stoker's personal library, were sold after his death in 1912. Bookseller James F. Drake was the first to bring the materials to America, and they changed ownership several times until 1970, when the Rosenbach purchased them from the firm of Charles Sessler of Philadelphia.

While there is currently no exhibition on display during regular hours, visitors will have another opportunity to view Stoker's notes, along with other "suitably scary" materials, on Halloween at the Rosenbach's Literary Costume Party. Due to the larger number of guests and presence of refreshments, partygoers will not have the same hands-on experience, but can get a close-up view of the materials and ask curators questions.

*Erin Moran can be reached at erin.moran@temple.edu.*

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# My 5-year-old son is a telepathic genius

nypost.com

By Lauren Tousignant

November 5, 2015 2:20pm

A genius 5-year-old from Los Angeles is said to have psychic powers.

Nyx Sanguino claims that not only is her autistic 5-year-old son a genius, he's also telepathic.

Ramses Sanguino started reading when he was 12 months old, and can understand and speak parts of Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Japanese, according to his mom. He can also solve rudimentary algebra problems and draw the entire periodic table.

But despite the 5-year-old's prodigious intelligence, it was his "telepathy" that attracted neuroscientist Diane Powell.

Powell, who is currently studying children around the world as part of a cutting-edge research project into telepathy, saw a video of Nyx and Ramses demonstrating his psychic ability and wanted to learn more.

"I wanted to see it for myself," Powell, who has taught at Harvard Medical School, told Barcroft USA. "See if it [telepathy] can be evaluated and actually tested under rigorous, controlled conditions."




*Five-year-old Ramses Sanguino Photo: Barcroft USA*



*Ramses with his mom, Nyx Sanguino Photo: Barcroft USA*

November 5, 2015

Nyx Sanguino posts videos on YouTube in which Ramses correctly guesses numbers she's written in secret.

"I don't know how to explain it," she told Barcroft.

Powell calls Ramses "one of the top five savants in the world," and is confident that telepathy exists.

"It's very risky to one's credibility to take on a subject like this," she said. "But I knew that when I got into it."



*Ramses as a toddler Photo: Barcroft USA*



*Photo: Barcroft USA*



*Ramses and Nyx with Dr. Diane Powell Photo: Barcroft USA*

Nyx Sanguino hopes that her son's talents will someday change the world, and believes Powell will be able to help them. They are currently trying to get Ramses sponsored into a special school for gifted autistic children.

"He is so smart that sometimes he scares me," Nyx Sanguino said. "I really want him to have the best education in the world and be happy."

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Photo: Barcroft USA



Photo: Barcroft USA

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# Mystery surrounds strange thumping noise in Derbyshire village

*November 9th 2015* derbytelegraph.co.uk

By CarolineJones | Posted: November 08, 2015



People living in Sawley noticed the noises. Photo: Google Maps.

RESIDENTS living in a Derbyshire village have been complaining after hearing mysterious thumping noises throughout Saturday night and Sunday morning.

And people **in Sawley** took to social networking website Facebook to see if they could solve the mystery of what was causing it.

On the Spotted: Sawley page, one person said: "Anyone else hear the thudding on the Haddon way estate all night and still going on? Or just me?"

Another said: "Any one have any idea where the boom, boom music that can be heard in Sawley since the early hours of this morning is coming from?"

**Do you have any idea what the noise is. Did you hear it? Let us know in the comments box, below.**

**2 comments**

- kriskringle20 | November 08 2015, 4:12PM

Any proof it was a race and why did the locals not complain ? And police shut it down ?

- shakenstirred | November 08 2015, 2:09PM

it was a rave near rattcliffe on sour apparently

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## Spending review: Nine new prisons to replace 'Victorian' jails

- 9 November 2015



*More than 3,000 new homes could be built on the city centre sites of old prisons*

Nine new prisons will open in England and Wales - five by 2020 - under plans to close "Victorian" jails and sell them for housing, the government says.

The new sites have not been decided but about 10,000 inmates will be moved in a bid to save about £80m a year.

The plans form part of the chancellor's spending review, due on 25 November.

There is speculation that Pentonville in north London might be closed, while the Ministry of Justice says Reading, which shut in 2013, is on the market.

Government sources say the prison-building programme will cost more than £1bn.

Chancellor George Osborne said many prisons are outdated "relics from Victorian times" that stand on "prime real estate". He said modern prisons that were better suited to the rehabilitation of inmates would be built instead.

New prisons are cheaper to run and easier to equip with the training and work facilities needed to help the rehabilitation of offenders.

Danny Shaw: Ambitious plans rely on inmate numbers

Spending review: Osborne 'secures deals' on 30% cuts

In addition to the nine new jails, a prison is currently being built in Wrexham and expansions are taking place at HMP Stocken, in Rutland, and HMP Rye Hill, in Warwickshire.

More than 3,000 new homes could be built on the city centre sites of the old prisons, the government said.

Grade II-listed HMP Reading was built in 1844. The Treasury announcement of its sale comes just a month after Reading Borough Council was told by the Ministry of Justice that the

prison would be retained "in case of contingencies".

Other possible London candidates for closure include Wormwood Scrubs, Wandsworth and Brixton. Meanwhile, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool are old jails which are known to be very expensive to run.

The MoJ said Blundeston Prison in Suffolk is also up for sale, while contracts have already been exchanged for Bulwood Hall, in Essex. Both sites have been closed since 2013.

Image caption

The MoJ said no decision has been made about future development on six other sites already closed - Wellingborough in Northamptonshire; Camp Hill on the Isle of Wight; Blantyre House, Kent; Downview in Surrey, and the former immigration removal centres in Dover and at Haslar in Hampshire. At present, they all remain available in case there is an urgent need for prison accommodation.

The MoJ also used its announcement to confirm that the lease on Dartmoor prison, in Devon, would not be renewed.

**Analysis**

**By Danny Shaw, BBC home affairs correspondent**

The feasibility of the government's plans depends largely on the size of the prison population, which is notoriously hard to predict.

There's no sign that the population is falling - it's currently 85,884 although it's not rising as fast as predicted a year ago.

As for the closures, it's been long speculated that Pentonville in north London, which was heavily criticised by inspectors, might be closed.

Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool are old jails which are known to be very expensive to run. Dartmoor Prison has already been earmarked for closure.

As well as Reading, several jails are currently unused and could be sold off, including Dover, which was until recently an immigration removal centre, and Downview Prison, in Surrey, which was a women's prison.

Ambitious plans rely on inmate numbers

**Increasing violence**

The chancellor and Justice Secretary Michael Gove made the announcement ahead of a visit to Brixton prison in south London.

Mr Gove said: "We will be able to design out the dark corners which too often facilitate violence and drug-taking.

"And we will be able to build a prison estate which allows prisoners to be rehabilitated, so they turn away from crime."

> We will be able to design out the dark corners which too often facilitate violence and drug-taking
> Michael Gove, Justice Secretary

In July, chief inspector of prisons Nick Hardwick said in his annual report that jails in England and Wales were in their worst state for 10 years, with increasing violence.

Responding to the Treasury announcement, shadow justice secretary Lord Falconer said "too many of our prisons are not fit for purpose".

He added: "We have heard similar promises before and the coalition government ended up selling high-performing prisons and increasing pressure on an already over-crowded system."

Prison Reform Trust director Juliet Lyon said "prison reform isn't just about building new prisons".

She called on the government to look at increases in sentence lengths, mental health care in prisons, the treatment for drug addiction, and dealing with binge drinking.

Mark Icke, from the Prison Governors' Association, welcomed the plans but said it was important to have a "whole look and whole fresh approach about how we treat people in custody".

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**Skeptical Inquirer Volume 20.6, November / December 1996**

Like Count Dracula, the mythical specter of "spontaneous human combustion" (SHC) refuses to die. The latest book to fan the flames of belief, so to speak, is Ablaze! by Larry E. Arnold. The dust-jacket blurb states that the author "redirected a background in mechanical and electrical engineering to explore the Unconventional." Indeed, Arnold is a Pennsylvania school bus driver who has written a truly bizarre book-one that takes seriously such pseudoscientific nonsense as poltergeists and ley lines (Arnold 1995, 362-6), and that suggests that the Shroud of Turin's image was produced by "flash photolysis" from a body transformed by SHC "into a higher energy state" (463).

As if he were a trained physicist on a par with any Nobel laureate, Arnold blithely posits a subatomic "pyrotron" as the mechanism for SHC (99-106), and he casually opines that "extreme stress could be the trigger that sets a human being ablaze" (163). In the many cases in which the alleged SHC victim had been a careless cigarette smoker or in which the victim's body was found lying on a hearth, Arnold dodges the issue of SHC by invoking "preternatural combustibility" (84), an imagined state in which a body's cells reach a heightened susceptibility to ignition by an outside spark. To understand Arnold's approach we can look at a few of his major examples, those cases which are treated at chapter length.

Arnold leads off with the 1966 case of Dr. John Irving Bentley who was consumed by fire in the bathroom of his home in Coudersport, Pennsylvania. About all that was left of him-in recognizable form-was his lower leg that had burned off at the knee; it was lying at the edge of a hole about two and a half by four feet which had burned into the basement.

Spontaneous human combustion? Actually the infirm ninety-year-old physician had a habit of dropping matches and hot ashes from his pipe upon his robes which were spotted with burns from earlier occasions. He also kept wooden matches in both pockets of his day robe-a situation that could transform an ember into a fatal blaze. Apparently waking to find his clothing on fire, Dr. Bentley made his way into the bathroom with the aid of his aluminum walker-probably at an accelerated pace-where he vainly attempted to extinguish the flames. Broken remains of what was apparently a water pitcher were found in the toilet. Once the victim fell on the floor, his burning clothing could have ignited the flammable linoleum; beneath that was hardwood flooring and wooden beams-wood for a funeral pyre. Cool air drawn from the basement in what is known as the "chimney effect" could have kept the fire burning hotly (Arnold 1995, 1-12; Nickell and Fischer 1984).

In chapter 6, Arnold relates the fiery death of a widow, Mary Reeser, who perished in her efficiency apartment in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1951. The case, a classic of SHC, has long been known as the "cinder woman" mystery. Except for a slippered foot, Mrs. Reeser's body was largely destroyed, along with the overstuffed chair in which she had been sitting and an adjacent end table and lamp (except for the latter's metal core). The rest of the apartment suffered little damage. "Nor," adds Arnold, "did the carpet beyond her incinerated chair show signs of fire damage!" (76)

In fact, the floors and walls of Mrs. Reeser's apartment were of concrete. When last seen by her physician son, Mrs. Reeser had been sitting in the big chair, wearing flammable nightclothes, and smoking a cigarette-after having taken two Seconal sleeping pills and stating her intention of taking two more. The official police report concluded, "Once the body became ignited, almost complete destruction occurred from the burning of its own fatty tissues." (Mrs. Reeser was a "plump" woman, and a quantity of "grease"-obviously fatty residue from her body-was left at the spot where the immolation occurred.) As the fat liquefied in the fire, it could have been absorbed into the chair stuffing to fuel still more fire to attack still more of the body (Arnold 1995, 73-91; Nickell and Fischer 1984). We will discuss the "candle effect" more fully later on.

In chapter 15, Arnold relates the case of one Jack Angel, who told him "an incredible incendiary tale." Angel stated that in mid-November 1974, while he was a self-employed traveling salesman, he awoke in his motorhome in Savannah, Georgia, to find that he had a severely burned hand, which later had to be amputated, plus a "hell of a hole" in his chest, and other burns-in the groin area, and on the legs and back "in spots!" Angel claimed one of his doctors said he had not been burned externally but rather internally, and he claimed to be a survivor of SHC. Interestingly, his clothing had not been burned, and there were no signs of burning in his motorhome.

Unfortunately, when Arnold and I appeared on a Canadian television show to debate SHC, Arnold was unaware of an earlier story about the injuries that Angel had told-in court. I revealed it on the show for the first time (courtesy of fellow investigator Phil Klass), thus publicly embarrassing Arnold, who has ever since been trying to rationalize away the evidence.

As it happens, a 1975 civil-action suit filed by Angel's attorney in Fulton County Superior Court tells how Angel (the plaintiff) was in his motorhome and "while Plaintiff was in the process of taking a shower, the water suddenly stopped flowing from the shower plumbing." In attempting to learn why there was insufficient water pressure, Angel "exited said motorhome and attempted to inspect the hot water heater. In making said inspection, the pressure valve on the hot water heater released and as a result, scalding hot water under tremendous pressure was sprayed upon plaintiff." The complaint claimed that the defendant, the manufacturer of the motorhome, was negligent both in the design of the heater and valve and in failing to provide adequate warning of the damage. The suit was later transferred to federal court where it was eventually dismissed for costs paid by the defendant.

Arnold attempted to rebut this evidence, for example, by quoting some motorhome mechanics, but it does not seem that he gave the mechanics the full facts in soliciting their statements. For instance, forensic analyst John F. Fischer and I did not postulate "a bad valve" (as Arnold quoted the servicemen as stating we did in Fate magazine). Indeed, Arnold has repeatedly dodged-even outright omitted-powerful corroborative evidence, such as the water pump's drive belt being off, the water pump's drive pulley being loose, and the water heater's safety relief valve being in the open position! In our investigative report John Fischer and I listed more than a dozen additional corroborative factors, including the unburned clothes, which were especially consistent with scalding. We even included the opinions of two

doctors whom Arnold cites as having diagnosed “electrical burns” as if their opinions-which were again apparently based on incomplete information-were more harmful to our position than his (Arnold 1995, 227-36; Nickell with Fischer 1992, 165-75).

Arnold’s next major case is that of Helen Conway, who perished in 1964 in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Except for her legs, her body was largely destroyed along with the upholstered chair in which she sat in her bedroom. The destruction took place in only twenty-one minutes (according to the fire marshal), although Arnold uses “commonsense deduction” (and an assumption or two) to whittle the time down to just six minutes (which becomes “a few seconds” in the caption to a photograph). Arnold asserts Mrs. Conway’s body “exploded.”

In fact Mrs. Conway was an infirm woman, who (according to the fire marshal) was also “reported to have been a heavy smoker with careless smoking habits.” He added: “Cigarette burn marks were evident about the bedroom.” (It is curious how people who are careless with fire are those who attract SHC.)

Apparently the fire took less time to destroy Mrs. Conway’s torso than it did the body of Mary Reeser, but it may have begun at the base of the seated body and burned straight upward, fed by the fat in the torso, and may have thus been a much more intense fire-not unlike grease fires that all who cook are familiar with. Indeed, in searching through the dense smoke for the victim, an assistant chief sank his hand “into something greasy” that proved to be the woman’s remains.

As to the bits of scattered debris that Arnold cites as evidence of “Spontaneous Human Explosion” (388), they could have been scattered by the chair’s heavy right arm having fallen across the body at one point. Another possibility is revealed by the fact that the assistant fire marshal stated, “There wasn’t debris scattered all over” (384), even though bits of debris are indeed shown in photos of the scene (illus. facing p. 212). In other words, the scattering may not have originally been present at the scene but could have been due to splashback from the firemen’s high-pressure spray that was used to extinguish nearby flames. It is important to note that it is only Arnold-and not the fire officials, who actually blamed the fire on a dropped cigarette-who claimed the body exploded (378-92).

The fifth and last of Arnold’s chapter-length cases is that of a fifty-eight-year-old retired fireman named George Mott. He died in 1986 in the bedroom of his home outside Crown Point, New York. His body was largely consumed along with the mattress of the bed on which he had lain. A leg, a shrunken skull (reported to have shrunk to an implausibly small size), and pieces of the rib cage were all that remained that were recognizably human. Arnold insists that there was no credible source for the ignition.

Whether or not we agree with Arnold’s dismissal of the theories of two fire investigators-first, that an electric arc shot out of an outlet and ignited Mott’s clothing, and second, that an “undetected” gas leak had been responsible-there are other possibilities. Mott was a man who formerly drank alcohol and smoked heavily. The day before he died he had been depressed over his illnesses which included respiratory problems and high blood pressure. What if, as could easily happen in such a state of mind, he became fatalistic and, shrugging off the consequences, opted for the enjoyment of a cigarette? This possibility gains credence

from the fact that he was not wearing his oxygen mask although he was in bed and his oxygen-enricher unit was running. On top of the unit, next to the mask, was an otherwise puzzling canister of “barn burner” matches, yet there was no stove or other device in the room they would be used for. (At least Arnold does not mention a stove or other device being in the room. If there was, then we have another possible explanation for the fire, and there are additional potential explanations in any case-each more likely than SHC.) (Arnold 1995, 393-411)

Now Arnold cites the Mott case as a quintessential one of SHC, based on the process of elimination. He does not allow SHC to be eliminated, however, although there is no single instance that proves its existence and no known mechanism by which it could occur. And so he often dismisses what he feels is unlikely in favor of that which the best scientific evidence indicates is impossible. Such thinking has been called “straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.”

In fact Arnold’s process-of-elimination approach here as elsewhere is based on a logical fallacy called “arguing from ignorance.” As the great nineteenth-century scientist Justus von Liebig explained: “The opinion that a man can burn of himself is not founded on a knowledge of the circumstances of the death, but on the reverse of knowledge-on complete ignorance of all the causes or conditions which preceded the accident and caused it” (Liebig 1851).

In his relentless drive to foster any sort of mystery, in this and other cases, Arnold raises many attendant questions. For example, he wonders why extremities, such as a victim’s leg, and nearby combustibles are not burned. The answer is that fire tends to burn upward; it burns laterally (sideways) with some difficulty. Anyone with camping experience has seen a log that was laid across a campfire reduced to ashes by the following morning while the butt ends of the log remained intact. Thus, outside the circle that burned through the carpet covering the concrete floor of Mary Reeser’s apartment was found her slippered foot, because Mrs. Reeser had a stiff leg that she extended when she sat. Beyond the circle some newspapers did not ignite, while a lamp and table within it did burn. Similarly, Dr. Bentley’s intact lower leg extended outside the edge of the hole that burned through his bathroom floor.

Beyond this matter of proximity, Arnold cites other examples of fire’s “selectivity” that puzzle him. For example, in the Mott case, he wonders why matches near the burning bed did not ignite, while objects in other rooms suffered severe heat damage. The answer is one of elevation: Heat rises. In Mrs. Reeser’s apartment, due to the accumulation of hot gases, soot had blackened the ceiling and walls above an almost level line some three and a half feet above the floor, there being negligible heat damage below the smoke line but significant damage above it: for example, plastic electrical switches had melted. Thus, in George Mott’s house, reports Arnold, “On the counter directly beneath the melted towel holder sits an unopened roll of Bounty towels, upright. Ironically, it and its plastic wrapping were undamaged except for a glazed film on the top!” (Arnold 1995, 398)

Other factors relevant to heat-damage “selectivity” include the object’s composition, density, confinement (for example, in a cupboard), placement on a surface that either radiates or retains heat, or its placement relative to convective currents, cinders carried aloft, and so

forth.

While acknowledging that there is often a source for the ignition of the body, Arnold points to the sometimes extreme destruction-of the torso especially-as evidence, if not of SHC, then of preternatural combustibility, the imagined heightening of the body's flammability. In the nineteenth century, alcohol consumption was thought to cause increased flammability, but we now know that its only effect is in making people more careless with fire and less effective in responding to it (Nickell and Fischer 1984).

Arnold and other SHC advocates are quick to suggest that bodies are difficult to burn (which is true under certain circumstances). According to popular SHC writer Vincent Gaddis, "the notion that fluid-saturated fatty tissues, ignited by an outside flame, will burn and produce enough heat to destroy the rest of the body is nonsense" (Gaddis 1967).

Actually the reference to "fluid-saturated" tissues is correct but misleading in Gaddis' attempt to suggest that an external source of ignition could not cause such extreme destruction to a body because the great amount of water would retard burning. In fact the argument works more strongly against the concept of SHC than for it, there being no known means by which such fluid-saturated tissue could self-ignite. On the other hand, it is a fact that human fatty tissue will burn, the water it contains being boiled off ahead of the advancing fire.

Referring specifically to claims of SHC (and favorably citing research done by John F. Fischer and me), a standard forensic text, Kirk's Fire Investigation, states:

> Most significantly, there are almost always furnishings, bedding, or carpets involved. Such materials would not only provide a continuous source of fuel but also promote a slow, smoldering fire and a layer of insulation around any fire once ignited. With this combination of features, the investigator can appreciate the basics-fuel, in the form of clothing or bedding as first ignition, and then furnishings as well as the body to feed later stages; an ignition source-smoking materials or heating appliances; and finally, the dynamics of heat, fuel, and ventilation to promote a slow, steady fire which may generate little open flame and insufficient radiant heat to encourage fire growth. In some circumstances the fat rendered from a burning body can act in the same manner as the fuel in an oil lamp or candle. If the body is positioned so that oils rendered from it can drip or drain onto an ignition source, it will continue to fuel the flames. This effect is enhanced if there are combustible fuels-carpet padding, bedding, upholstery stuffing-that can absorb the oils and act as a wick. (DeHaan 1991, 305)

Dr. Dougal Drysdale of Edinborough University agrees:

> The idea that the body can burn like a candle isn't so far fetched at all. In a way, a body is like a candle-inside out. With a candle the wick is on the inside, and the fat on the outside. As the wick burns the candle becomes molten and the liquid is drawn onto the wick and burns. With a body, which consists of a large amount of fat, the fat melts and is drawn onto the clothing which acts as a wick, and then continues to burn. (Drysdale 1989)

Experiments show that liquefied human fat burns at a temperature of about two hundred and fifty° Celsius; however, a cloth wick placed in such fat will burn even when the temperature falls as low as twenty-four° Celsius (Dee 1965). In an 1854 English case, a woman's body had been partially destroyed in the span of two hours; it was explained that "beneath the body there was a hempen mat, so combustible, owing to the melted human fat with which it was impregnated, that when ignited it burnt like a link [i.e., a pitch torch]" (Stevenson 1883, 718-27).

Even a lean body contains a significant amount of fat, which is present even in the bone marrow (Snyder 1967, 233, 242). Indeed, "once the body starts to burn, there is enough fat and inflammable substances to permit varying amounts of destruction to take place. Sometimes this destruction by burning will proceed to a degree which results in almost complete combustion of the body," as police officials reported in the Mary Reeser case (Blizin 1951). Moreover, in general, "women burn hotter and quicker than men, because proportionally, women carry more fat" (Bennett n.d.).

Arnold tries to compare favorably the partial destruction of bodies that occurs in his SHC cases (in which limbs, large segments of bone, and other matter may remain, although that which does is rarely quantified or described scientifically) with the more complete destruction typical of crematories. But this is an apples-versus-oranges comparison at best. As Drysdale (1989) explains:

> In a crematorium you need high temperatures-around 1,300° C, or even higher-to reduce the body to ash in a relatively short period of time. But it's a misconception to think you need those temperatures within a living room to reduce a body to ash in this way. You can produce local, high temperatures, by means of the wick effect and a combination of smouldering and flaming to reduce even bones to ash. At relatively low temperatures of 500 ° C-and if given enough time-the bone will transform into something approaching a powder in composition.

It is interesting that the major proponents of SHC — Michael Harrison (Fire from Heaven, 1978), Jenny Randles and Peter Hough (Spontaneous Human Combustion, 1992), and Larry E. Arnold (Ablaze!, 1995) — are all popular writers who are credulous as to other paranormal claims. They stand in contrast to the physicists and chemists, the forensics specialists, and other scientists who question - on the evidence - the reality of spontaneous human combustion.

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# Owner hears 'kaboom,' finds car on roof of Michigan home

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October 27, 2015 8:37 PM



*In this Oct. 26, 2015 photo provided by the Michigan State Police, a Ford Mustang is stopped on a roof of a house in Woodhull Township, Mich. State police say the driver had a medical problem and lost control of his car on Interstate 69 in Shiawassee County. (Michigan State Police via AP)*

WOODHULL TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — When Joyce Kingsley heard "kaboom" while at her Michigan home, she immediately thought about extreme weather.

The 83-year-old needed to look up: A Ford Mustang was parked on the roof of her home after the driver had a medical problem Monday and lost control on Interstate 69 in Shiawassee County.

Kingsley's home about 20 miles northeast of Lansing is built next to a hill, and the roof is nearly level with the ground, The Argus-Press of Owosso reported.

"I was just watching TV inside. I had it up pretty loud — but this was much louder," Kingsley said.

State police said the Mustang went through several bushes, trees and a fence before stopping on the roof. The driver was treated for low blood sugar but wasn't hurt.

"The driver is extremely lucky," Trooper Ben Rowell said.

Kingsley plans to put a tarp over the damaged roof until it can be fixed.

"It could've been a lot worse," she said. "I'm glad everyone is all right."

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# Paradise Lost at the Moonhole Mansion: An Abandoned Crusoe Dream

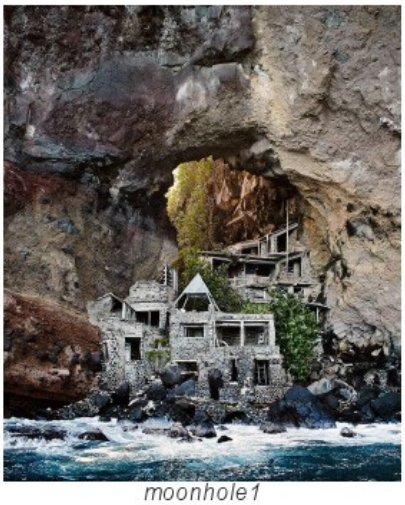
*5th Nov, 2015* messynessychic.com

## Paradise Lost at the Moonhole Mansion: An Abandoned Crusoe Dream



*moonhole3w*

***A***t night, the rising moon peers through the natural volcanic arch, revealing the silhouettes of windows and doorways alluding to a crumbling fortress, guarding a paradise lost. It shares its walls with the rocks, built haphazardly into the Caribbean cliff on the western tail of the island of Bequia, but the rooms are empty, the whole structure eerily lifeless. Like the centrepiece of a mystery movie's opening scene, the magic of Moonhole is as much a sight to be seen as it is a story to be told…



*moonhole1*

***(c) Douglas Friedman/ DuJour***

In the late 1950s, a young-at-heart American couple, Tom and Gladdie Johnston, had retired from the advertising business and decided to chuck it all and move to Bequia, a quiet sandy paradise void of chain hotels, overshadowed by its southern neighbour, Mustique, the preferred island getaway of royalty and rockstars.



*OLYMPUS DIGITAL CAMERA*

They took over a small 9-room inn called the Sunny Caribbee Hotel and became friendly with a local island family who owned the uninhabited western end of Bequia (pronounced "Beck-way"). Eager to discover more of

their new island home, they took up the family's invitation to visit a strange geological arch formation known as the Moonhole. At the time, that end of the island was accessible only by a watery trek along the bottom of the cliffs.

They began to picnic and camp there, and it quickly became the couple's favourite spot on the island. In the 1960s, they ended up buying the entire 30-acre tract on a whim and started building a house beneath the natural arch of volcanic rock, working with local masons from a nearby village who walked in daily to bring food and supplies.



*moonhole3*

In the early stages, the Johnston's lived amongst the Moonhole's rocks in a Swiss Family Robinson daze. There were just boards across rocks under the natural volcanic roof, the end of their bed loomed frighteningly close to the drop down to the water's edge and "there was nothing to keep you from falling out of the kitchen", remembered Gladdie Johnston in an early interview.

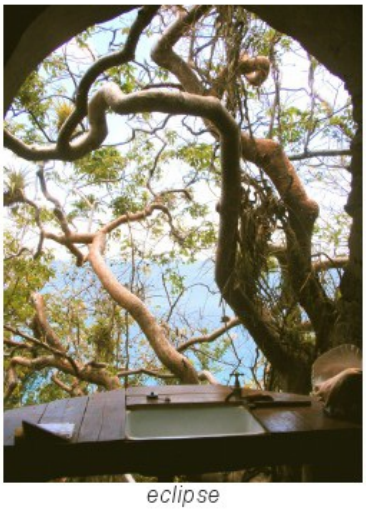


*OLYMPUS DIGITAL CAMERA*

The fact that Tom had zero formal training as an architect didn't stop him as he gradually moulded his mini island citadel of rooms open to the elements, connected by twisting staircases on several levels winding up from the sea. Built on his philosophy that "a house should not be built to be looked upon, but designed so its occupants can look outward and live outwardly, enjoying the world", one of largest guest rooms of the house was named the Whale Room, because when you woke up in the morning, "without lifting your head from the pillow, you could see whales spouting in the distant sea".

More of a hamlet than a house, it was almost entirely decorated with castaway material; shipwrecked or native wood were used as beams and flooring, anchor chains as railings, whalebones recovered from the sea as bannisters and desk tops and fishnet floats as table bases. It became a common saying on Bequia, "Don't throw anything away. Sell it to Tom Johnston."

Without wells or electricity, they collected rainwater from the so-called roofs and stored it in cisterns for bathing and washing. The floors were not level, most rooms didn't have enough



eclipse



moonhole11

walls to be considered a real room, assembled around a tree or nooks in the island rock. When the secretary of the local government came to the Johnston home to measure their new home for tax purposes, “he couldn’t tell exactly where the tax-free outdoors ended and the taxable indoors began”.



moonhole10

But one thing was for sure, the Johnston’s had found paradise.




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***Found on the Getty Image archives***

When they began inviting friends and relatives to their new home, entertaining them at the bar fashioned from the recovered jaw bone of a humpback whale, visitors were instantly enamoured with the Crusoe lifestyle the couple had created for themselves– and they wanted it too. But this is where the Johnston’s paradise found, probably began to lose its way.

The Moonhole house had attracted the attention of the outside world, with publications in *The New York Times* and *National Geographic*. Persistent friends urged Tom to build houses for them, and very quickly, the former ad man who had “never put together anything more substantial than a sandwich” was now an in demand architect on the island of Bequia. He agreed to build their houses and in 1964, Tom and Gladdie founded the Moonhole Company Limited, aimed at developing the Moonhole property as what he called a “people preserve” for




Sports Architecture: Tom Johnston and his wife, Gladys, with guests on the roof of their volanic house called Moonhole. The couple is building a multi-layered home out of lava, whale ribs, and mortar. Bequia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 11/20/1966 CREDIT: John G. Zimmerman (Photo by John G. Zimmerman /Sports Illustrated/Getty Images) (Set Number: X12055 )


"MOONHOLE" —WHERE TIME STANDS STILL

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writers, artists, friends and people to get away from it all. Over thirty years, he built sixteen more houses, a commissary, office, living quarters for Moonhole staff and a gallery where the community could congregate every Sunday. But expanding didn't mean getting rid of his strict eco-friendly values…

Still intimately connected with nature, the houses were built with the same local stone and Tom still constructed his rooms and stairways *around* trees rather than cutting them down; the lines ever blurred between indoors and out. Nor did he budge on building a road into the property and the properties relied on solar electricity.



GG+Treetop+bedroom+patio

Often referred to as the charismatic self-appointed rajah of Moonhole, Tom personally vetted each new homeowner.



moonholebeach

They had to trust his style, be compatible with him and accepting of his rules and decisions without question. But they were rarely disappointed with the finished result of the cave-like dwellings he built for them within his tropical colony.

The Johnston's also remained devoted to the local people who staffed and built Moonhole over the years, providing them with jobs and covering medical and educational expenses. They also set up a local charity which continues to help those in need on the island today.

Tom Johnston died in 2001, and in his will, he left his controlling interest in Moonhole Company Limited to a trust that would be dedicated to preserving the "unique architecture,



*moonholestaff*



*moonholebequia*

lifestyle, and vision of the Johnstons" and to protecting the wildlife and marine life.

But things went south pretty quickly.

The community spirit faded in Tom's absence, original homeowners passed away or became too elderly to visit and the next generation fought for control, lawsuits were filed, even Johnston's own son tried to contest his father's will. Contributions to the cost of upkeep dwindled, while some properties were altered in ways that contrasted the Johnstons' vision of a simplistic eco-paradise to blend in with the natural landscape. As Moonhole began to lose its once devoted but now-disillusioned staff, many of the houses became seriously neglected.



*moonhole11*

The original Moonhole villa itself under the soaring natural arch became so unsafe from neglect, that it's now been completely abandoned and is strictly condemned to trespassers since rocks began falling from the archway onto the roof.

Eleven of the original villas were sold off to different owners since Tom's death.

A quick Google of "moonhole villa for sale" and you'll find several property listings for many of the villas, ranging from $325,000 to $2 million, including **this one at a "reduced price!"**, accompanied by photos of one of Johnston's homes in shambles, with his once admired whalebone sculptures strewn around.

While the Moonhole of today is run by a company rather than a charismatic and slightly mad self-made architect with a utopian vision, there is still undoubtedly a piece of paradise to be



Moonholemansion

found within this fallen caribbean colony of retired hippies.

The lawsuits are now finally over after the court's ruling in favor of the trust, which is seeing some of Moonhole's most faithful residents returning to ensure it rises again.

The staff are coming back, the remaining homes still owned by the trust are being renovated and **made available to rent**, which prevents them from falling into disrepair and pays for the upkeep of the

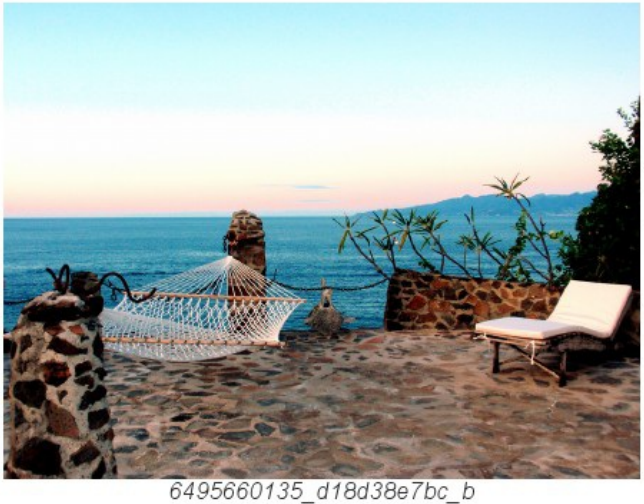


moonholehouse



moonholehouse2

community as well as the continued protection of the local marine and wild life. If you're interested in reliving the real-life story of the "Swiss Family Johnston", the 2-3 bedroom villas will set you back $1,500 a week.



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The rent includes the services of a talented cook and friendly housekeeper, many of whom have worked at Moonhole for 20 years. And while you're there, you should probably pick up a copy of ***Moonhole: The Rise and Fall of an Island Utopia***, written by Charles Brewer, one of the homeowners chosen by Tom Johnston himself to tell the story of his crazy Crusoe dream.

**The Moonhole's website is here.**

***Sources: 1, 2, 3 / Images: Moonhole's Flickr/ Facebook page, Getty, Bruce Farr***

**Creative**



moonhole6w



agnew



agnew 1



moonhole13

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**The Witch Trials - Pendle Witch Trials (England, 1612 - 1634)**

*Pendle Witch Trials (England, 1612 - 1634) on a map of Europe*

The Pendle Witch Trials, part of the more extensive Lancashire Witch Trials, are among the most famous witch trials in English history, as well as some of the best recorded of the 17th Century. Unusually for England at that time, the trial proceedings were officially published by the clerk to the court, Thomas Potts, in his “The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster”.

The original twelve accused all lived in the area around Pendle Hill in Lancashire, England, a wild and lawless region at that time. Roger Nowell, the local Justice of the Peace, was required in 1612 to compile a list of recusants in the area (those who refused to attend the English Church and to take communion, which was then a criminal offence) and, at the same time, a claim was brought by a Halifax peddler named John Law against Alizon Device of Pendle, accusing her of causing a stroke by witchcraft.

She freely confessed that she had sold her soul to the Devil and appeared to be convinced of her own powers to injure. During questioning, however, more members of the family became implicated, as well as members of another family, the Chattoxes, who were also reputedly involved in witchcraft in the Pendle area, and who were rivals and competitors of the Device family, as well as several others who were merely acquaintances of the families.

In the end, twelve people from Pendle were accused: Alizon Device, Elizabeth Device, James Device, Elizabeth Southerns, Alice Gray, Jennet Preston, Anne Whittle, Anne Redferne, Alice Nutter, Katherine Hewitt, John Bulcock and Jane Bulcock. Some of them appear to have genuinely believed in their own guilt, and probably did indeed consider themselves to be witches, in the sense of being village healers who practised magic, probably in return for payment (such men and women were common in 16th and 17th Century rural England, and an accepted part of village life).

The twelve were charged with the murders of ten people by the use of witchcraft, and ten of the twelve were tried at Lancaster Assizes in August 1612, in a group that also included the Salmesbury witches (Jane Southworth, Jennet Brierley, and Ellen Brierley, who were charged with child murder and cannibalism), Margaret Pearson (the so-called Padiham Witch, who was facing her third trial for witchcraft, this time for killing a horse), and Isobel Robey (from Windle, accused of using witchcraft to cause sickness). The trials have become known collectively as the Lancashire Witch Trials. One (Jennet Preston) was tried at York, and one (Elizabeth Southerns) died in prison.



*Contemporary woodcut of the hanging of the Pendle Witches at Lancaster Castle (from http://www.advantageinternet.net/Witch/trial.html)*

*Contemporary woodcut of the hanging of the Pendle Witches at Lancaster Castle*

Of the eleven individuals who went to trial (nine women and two men) ten were found guilty and executed by hanging, and only one (Alice Gray) was found not guilty. Nine-year-old Jennet Device was a key witness for the prosecution (giving evidence against members of her own family), something that would not have been permitted in many other 17th Century criminal trials, but King James had made a case for suspending the normal rules of evidence for witchcraft trials in his “Daemonologie”.

Several years later, having played her part in the deaths of her mother, brother and sister, Jennet Device found herself accused of witchcraft as well. She was one of a group of twenty tried at Lancaster Assizes in 1633-1634, all but one of whom were found guilty. One of the most notable of the accused was Margaret Johnson who, having convinced herself of her own guilt, handed herself in to the authorities. Her subsequent declaration contains all the classic ingredients of a witchcraft confession, including her description of selling her soul to a demon called Mamilian.

However, the witches of 1633-1634, although found guilty in Lancashire, were able to appeal to the crown, and four women, including Margaret Johnson, were sent to London for further investigation. After being examined by doctors it was concluded that they were innocent in spite of Johnson’s voluntary confession. They were not therefore executed, and remained incarcerated in Lancaster Gaol, where it is likely they died. These later Lancashire witchcraft trials were the subject of the contemporary play by Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, “The Late Lancashire Witches”.

Pendle Hill, which dominates the landscape of the area, continues to be associated with witchcraft, and hosts a hilltop gathering every Halloween. The witches have become the inspiration for much of Pendle's tourism and heritage industries.

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# Polish Vampires, Sailor's Luck, and Babies Born Under a Curse

by **Annetta Black** / 18 Jul 2013



article-image

*(via Wikimedia)*

With the kind of headlines that immediately catch our eye, news reached us last week that the decapitated skeletons of four suspected vampires were discovered recently in in Gliwice, Poland during excavations for a road building project.

Archaeologists at the site suspect that the dead might have been accused of being less-dead than their neighbors might have liked. Found with their heads removed, and placed between their legs, this otherwise unusual arrangement was a relatively well-known anti-rising-from-the-dead measure taken in many countries, particularly during the Middle Ages. Strangely enough, anti-vampire burials in Poland have been recorded as recently as 1914.

Weirdly, finds like this are not as rare as it might seem. Other vampire burials have been uneathed around the world, including recent discoveries in the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, as well as our favorite: the brick-eating Vampire of Venice.

So far, the burials and bodies found in Gwlice remain undated, so little is known beyond the physical evidence, but that got us to wondering: what might have led to the belief that these people were part of the undead? Possibly, it's because they refused to eat their amniotic sack like good children.

*(source)*

As it turns out, Polish legend holds that a child born with a caul (a bit of the mother's amniotic sack) still covering the head was destined for a future of bloodsucking as a *vjesci,* or vampire. Says the ever-reliable vampire-focused internet:

*"According to the legends a person was doomed to become a vjesci if they were born with* ***caul*** *(a thin, filmy piece of membrane that sticks to some infants at birth). When a child was born with caul, it was said the only way to prevent them from becoming a vampire was to save the caul, dry it, ground it up and feed it to the child on its seventh birthday." (source)*



Fig. 692.—A child born with a caul. (After Aldrovandi.)

*Caulbearer vampire - Atlas Obscura*

It is interesting to note however, that elsewehere, caulbearers were considered lucky or to have been given the gift of second sight. For example, in England, cauls were considered to be particularly lucky during the Victorian period, and saved and sold as a talisman against drowning.

So common was the practice that Charles Dickens wrote of this tradition in *David Copperfield*:

*"I was born with a caul, which was advertised for sale, in the newspapers, at the low price of fifteen guineas. Whether sea-going people were short of money about that time, or were short of faith and preferred cork jackets, I don't know; all I know is, that there was but one solitary bidding, and that was from an attorney connected with the bill-broking business, who offered two pounds in cash, and the balance in sherry, but declined to be guaranteed from drowning on any higher bargain."*

**Further Reading and Resources:**

"Vampire Graveyard found in Poland?" - thenews.pl

"Caul: A Sailor's Charm" - Pitt Rivers Museum

Vjesci - Wikipedia

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**Tuesday, February 26, 2013**

## America's First Paranormal Reality Show

In February 1958, strange things were happening on Long Island. A house belonging to a family named Herrmann was being beset by strange and inexplicable incidents that were attributed to a ghost who was dubbed "Popper" (for reasons that will soon become obvious). But what was really happening in the house? Was it an unseen force from beyond -- or was it something else? On this date, February 26, Popper even got the attention of researchers from J.B. Rhine's famous parapsychology lab at Duke University, but they came no closer to solving the mystery than anyone else.

The "Popper" case remains unique in the annals of the supernatural for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that this became the first haunting that was actually shown on television. Wide-eyed audiences all across the country stared at their television screens in amazement as Popper literally performed for the cameras. These films became the ghost's claim to fame, but were only a small part of the weird happenings!



**The Herrmann family became the reluctant stars of America's first paranormal reality TV show**

Popper first made himself known at around 3:30 in the afternoon of February 3, 1958. The James Herrmann family lived in Seaford, New York, a suburb on Long Island, about 30 miles from New York City. Their white and green ranch-style home at 1648 Redwood Path had been built in 1953 and contained three bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen, a small dining room, a living room and a basement that was divided between a utility room and a playroom. In other words, it was a typical 1950s-era home in a quiet, conservative neighborhood with public parks and tree-lined streets. It was the last place that you would expect anything out of the ordinary to occur.

That February 3 was a day like most any other. It was clear and cold outside and Lucille Herrmann, a registered nurse, was there to welcome her children home from school and to prepare dinner. The children were Lucille, 13, and James, 12, two ordinary kids with ordinary

interests. Their ordinary world, however, was about to change.

Soon after the children entered the kitchen, chaos erupted in the house. In a matter of moments, various bottles containing liquid in different rooms of the house suddenly began to pop their caps and dance around. No one saw the bottles move or explode, but all of them heard the caps as they popped loose and the bottles' contents went spewing into the air.

They would later discover an opened bottle of bleach in the basement utility room, a bottle of liquid starch in the kitchen, bottles of shampoo and medicine in the bathroom and a bottle of holy water that had opened in the master bedroom and was lying on its side with the contents spilled. Each of the bottles had been sealed with twist-off metal or plastic caps. There were no corks or crimped caps that might have somehow come loose.

Puzzled, Mrs. Herrmann called her husband, who worked for Air France in New York City, and reported the strange "popping" sounds they had heard. Herrmann was just as confused by the incident as his wife was, but since no one had been hurt, he decided there was no need for him to go home early.

Following his usual schedule, Herrmann took the train to Long Island and arrived home just before 7:00 p.m. During his commute, he pondered his wife's call and was sure that he had a solution for the mystery. He believed that some sort of chemical reaction in the products had caused the bottle lids to blow and the fact that they did so at the same time was merely a coincidence. Perhaps it had been caused by some sort of excessive humidity in the house? He quickly investigated the bottles when he arrived home and confessed to being baffled when he found that they were screw-top lids. How could they have simply popped off?

The excitement over the event having passed, and since nothing more had happened, the family decided to write the experience off as "just one of those funny things." Two uneventful days passed and the popping bottles were almost forgotten.

Then, on Thursday, once again at about the same time that the Herrmann children came home from school, another half dozen bottles popped their lids. A bottle of nail polish burst open, as did a bottle of rubbing alcohol, a bottle of bleach, detergent, starch and the bottle that contained holy water on Mrs. Herrmann's dresser. It was an almost exact repeat performance of February 3.

On Friday night, it happened again. Only this time, when the bottles began to pop open, James Herrmann began to suspect that he knew the culprit responsible for the multiple containers' strange behavior. He surmised that his science-loving son had somehow rigged the bottles to pop in order to scare his family. He thought that perhaps his son had planted some carbonated capsules inside the bottles and timed it so that he could get home from school in time to see the startled expression on his mother's face.

As he developed this theory, Herrmann spent the entire weekend secretly observing Jimmy. He was determined to catch him in the act of tampering with a bottle. It's no wonder that he

was surprised on Sunday morning, February 9, when several caps popped off bottles of starch, turpentine and holy water, leaving the containers rocking back and forth on the shelves. Herrmann had kept a close eye on Jimmy, so how could the boy have managed to put something inside the bottles without his father seeing him do it? Feeling baffled and a bit angry, Herrmann burst into the bathroom, where Jimmy was brushing his teeth, and accused him of rigging the bottles to pop. The boy vigorously protested his innocence and as if to prove the point, Herrmann was startled to see a bottle of medicine suddenly move across the top of the sink and fall into the basin. A moment later, a bottle of shampoo also slid across the sink and fell with a thud to the floor.



**Jimmy Herrmann, posing with some of the broken items in the house**

Still skeptical, Herrmann immediately examined the bathroom, searching for hidden wires or strings. He found nothing and finally realized that there were things going on in the house that he could not explain. Unsure of what else to do, he called the Nassau County Police Department and spent the next several minutes on the phone trying to get Lieutenant E. Richardson, the desk officer who answered the call, to take him seriously. When he heard the story, Richardson accused Herrmann of either playing a practical joke or drinking too much, but he was soon swayed by the earnest tone of the man's voice. It helped that Herrmann had a good reputation in the community. Richardson promised to send someone to investigate.

Officer James Hughes went to the house feeling skeptical and perhaps wondering how he managed to wind up with the nutcase calls. Within a few minutes, though, he had changed his mind about the nature of the case when several bottles in the bathroom popped their lids and fired them in his direction. He quickly concluded that the Herrmanns did indeed need help.

Detective Joseph Tozzi was assigned to look into the case. He read Hughes' report of the incident in the bathroom with interest. While not willing to pass judgment without actually visiting the scene, he was relatively sure the Herrmanns were experiencing some natural phenomenon or were simply imagining things. Or, he noted with the cynicism of a veteran police officer, the popping bottles could be getting some help a human source.



**Detective Joseph Tozzi**

On February 11, Detective Tozzi began his vigil at the Herrmann house. That same evening, a perfume atomizer overturned and spilled perfume in the daughter's bedroom. There was no one in the room at the time, according to reports. Over the next few days, the disturbances seemed to center around the bottle of holy water in the parents' bedroom. On several occasions, the lid of the bottle popped off and once, after hearing the distinctive sound, Mr. Herrmann dashed into the room and found the bottle on the floor. He picked it up and found it strangely warm to the touch.

Later that same day, on February 15, the activity took another turn. As the Herrmann children were watching television in the living room with Marie Murtha, their middle-aged second cousin, a porcelain figurine on an end table next to the couch began to wiggle and then shot two feet through the air, making a loud crashing sound as it landed on the floor. To the amazement of Miss Murtha and the children, the figurine was unbroken.

After this last demonstration, the Herrmanns decided to turn to another source for comfort and to aid the stumped Detective Tozzi in his investigations. They contacted Father William McLeod of the Church of St. William the Abbott for help. As devout Catholics, the Herrmanns believed that the church could help them where ordinary methods had failed. Father McLeod came to the house and sprinkled holy water in each of the rooms. Unfortunately, "Popper," as the poltergeist came to be called, had decided that he didn't want to leave.

During the two weeks since Popper had made his first appearance in the Herrmann house, news of the strange happenings had leaked to newspapers, radio and television reports. The story received a great deal of publicity, even meriting articles in *Time* and *Life* magazines. If the beleaguered family thought that mopping up spilled liquids and having their possessions broken by an unseen force was bad, then the onslaught of public attention was worse. During the day, the Herrmann home was surrounded by reporters, photographers, curiosity-seekers and an astounding array of television equipment. While the Herrmanns managed to get used to these intrusions into their lives, they weren't quite prepared for some of the strangeness that came with it.



**Detective Joseph Tozzi being interviewed on television**

Letters and telephone calls came every day. Many of them proposed logical solutions, while others assured the Herrmanns that Martians had landed nearby or that the problem in the house was the spirit of a long-dead Indian chief or that the Russians were tunneling under Long Island to invade New York. The Herrmanns managed to stay patient with everyone, though. They never turned anyone away and they listened attentively to all the calls and suggestions that came in, even those who shouted “Repent!” into the telephone at midnight or proclaimed that “the Sputniks are here!”

Many of the letters and visitors were less easy to tolerate, however. Letters arrived in barely intelligible scrawl, condemning the Herrmanns for their sins and suggesting that they had invited these “tricks of Satan.” Ministers from all sorts of dubious faiths conducted rituals on the front lawn of the house. One man in a blue serge suit, who claimed to be a “holy man from Center Moriches,” (a nearby town on Long Island) knelt in the yard and prayed for 10 minutes. Then he stood and announced: “Everything is all right. You have been forgiven.” With that, he left -- but “Popper” remained.

But not all of the suggestions and attempts to help were so bizarre. One man who came to the house, Robert Zider, was a physicist from Long Island’s Brookhaven National Laboratory. He brought a set of dowsing rods with him and went over the property with them. When he was finished, he stated that he believed there were underground streams below the house. He thought that the water might be creating a “freak magnetic field.” Detective Tozzi examined this idea at length, but a geological survey suggested that the information was inaccurate.

Tozzi’s case file grew thicker and thicker with added notes, observations, research and facts that he collected. At one point, he had been walking down the basement stairs with Jimmy Herrmann when a bronze statue of a horse weighing nearly 100 pounds flew across the basement and hit the detective in the legs. Jimmy had been nowhere near the statue and no one else was down there. How had it happened? Tozzi had absolutely no idea.

He had checked with the Air Force and after studying their flight plans, they had told him that sonic booms from passing jets could not have caused the disturbances. He also ruled out



Bottle-Popping Force Shakes Our Reporter

NEWSDAY reporter Dave Kahn has spent the past few weeks covering the bottle-poppings in the James Herrmann household from the outside. Determined to find the answer by the weekend, he has volunteered to cover the story from another angle—by living in the house. This is his first report.

By Dave Kahn

Seaford—The mysterious plague that has drawn national attention to the James Herrmann home struck again yesterday while I was in the house. And I must admit that it was a frightening experience.

The explosive crash of a figurine slamming against a wooden secretary jolted me out of a quiet conversation. And later, a mysterious missile that seemingly came out of nowhere as a dresser toppled convinced me that something strange was taking place.

Things started happening while I was having coffee with Jim Herrmann in the dining room of his nineteen room house at 3548 Redwood Path. Mrs. Herrmann was doing the dishes in the kitchen. The children, Lucille, 13, and Jimmy, 12, had been sent to bed just 10 minutes before at 8 P.M. Jim and I were talking quietly about the disturbances.

Suddenly, there was a loud crash from the living room behind me. "There it goes!" Mrs. Herrmann shouted. Herrmann and I rushed into the living room but Jimmy got there before us. We found that a porcelain figurine of a colonial man had smashed against a wooden secretary. The figurine was lying on the floor in pieces. The secretary was badly dented.

The Herrmanns seemed to take the occurrence in stride, and went into an apparently practiced routine of looking for other damage. Jim found that one of two lamp tables on his dresser had fallen over—probably when the figurine flipped—but was not damaged. I was considerably shaken, however. My pulse went damp and I shivered. I found that I could only speak weakly when I telephoned the news to the office.

Ten minutes later, Mr. and Mrs. Herrmann and I were still surveying the damage when we heard a low rumble. I thought it came from the office. But after it stopped, Jim opened the door of Jimmy's room and discovered that the dresser had overturned. Its drawers were partly opened and the lamp and the models on its top had fallen under the bed. "I turned when I heard the noise," the boy said, "and a part of it (the dresser) landed on my feet. I only saw it fall the last few inches." The dresser was the heaviest object affected so far.

Nothing else happened after that. Dur.

—Continued on Page 13

UNSCHEDULED FLIGHT. Intrepid Newsday reporter Dave Kahn, trying to track down the mysterious forces at work in the Seaford house of boisterous bottles, examines model airplane that took off yesterday from dresser at right, to landed on floor, and took other objects with it.

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radio waves by contacting the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). The Long Island Lighting Company had set up a delicate oscilloscope in the basement, but they had detected no underground vibrations. Building inspectors from the town of Hempstead pronounced the house structurally sound. The Seaford Fire Department even inspected a well on the property to see if changes in the water level could be causing the disturbances. However, they found that the water level had been stable for at least five years. Although puzzled, Tozzi remained determined and he tried valiantly to discover a source for the happenings.

He finally found hope in a letter from a woman named Helen Connolly of Revere, Massachusetts. She wrote that she had experienced odd events in her living room, where chairs and furniture moved about. She didn't have a ghost in her house, but rather a heavy downdraft through her fireplace. When capped with a rotary metal turbine, the flying tables and chairs ceased to fly. Mr. Herrmann immediately had one installed on his own chimney, convinced that the strangeness was finally coming to an end.

But that wasn't meant to be.... No sooner had the workmen completed the installation than a porcelain figurine launched itself from a table and smashed against a desk. The figurine had managed to travel a distance of more than 12 feet. It left a dent on the wood that was broadcast to television audiences all over the New York metropolitan area.

On February 20, events became even more violent. Another figurine was smashed against the desk, a bottle of ink popped its screw cap, then sailed into the air and splashed its contents on the wall and a sugar bowl flew off the table under the watch of Detective Tozzi. It had been close to Jimmy but not within his reach. Needing a break, the Herrmann family spent the night with a relative. Tozzi stayed in the house, but the rest of the night passed without incident. When the family returned the next evening, though, the sugar bowl again flew from the table and this time, it shattered into pieces.

On February 24, Tozzi was startled to his feet by the sound of a loud noise from Jimmy's room. No one had been in the room or near it, yet a large bookcase had managed to fall facedown onto the floor. The next night, while Jimmy was in the room doing his homework, his record player lifted and moved 15 feet across the room. A small statue of the Virgin Mary flew more than 12 feet and struck a mirror frame in the master bedroom. A bookcase filled with encyclopedias was upended. A heavy glass centerpiece from the dining room table flew up and stuck a cupboard, chipping away a piece of molding before falling to the floor. A world globe shot down the hallway from Jimmy's room and just missed Detective Tozzi. A newspaper photographer named John Gold from the *London Evening News* witnessed his

flashbulbs lift off a table and fly through the air to strike a wall. In addition, Popper had begun knocking on the walls to get attention, although no attempts to “communicate” with the ghost (if indeed it was a ghost) were ever made.

Tozzi had become concerned about the new violence in the disruptions. Until that point, the activity had been limited to popping bottle tops. He had explored every possible explanation that he could come up with and while he was not prepared to say the house was haunted, he was all out of fresh ideas. About this same time, the staff of scientists at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, North Carolina, became interested in the events reported in the Herrmann home. This group of researchers, under the leadership of Dr. J.B. Rhine, had already compiled a mass of evidence that supported the idea that certain people, under the right circumstances, could influence the behavior of objects without touching them. They called it psychokinesis, or PK.

As the disturbances at the home continued (and in fact, increased) Dr. Rhine’s assistant, Dr. J. Gaither Pratt, traveled to New York and arrived at the Herrmann house on February 26. Pratt believed that someone in the house was unknowingly causing the strange incidents to occur. Meanwhile, other researchers came to believe that the incidents in the house were being caused by an actual ghost, a poltergeist, or “noisy spirit.” These prankster ghosts traditionally targeted religious items, as the disturbances had done with the holy water and the Virgin Mary statue in the Herrmann house.

On the other hand, strong evidence remained for the idea that there was a human component behind the haunting. It had been noted by the Duke researchers that an adolescent child, usually a girl, was almost always among the members of the household being plagued by poltergeist phenomena. They believed it was possible that this young person might be capable of psychokinesis during the height of puberty. In every case, though, the young person might be unaware that she or he was unconsciously causing the events to happen, making them as bewildered as the adults around them. In the case of the Herrmann house, Jimmy (according to Detective Tozzi’s notes) was at or near the scene of the poltergeist disturbances more than 75 percent of the time. For many incidents, he was the sole witness. However, the detective had cleared the boy of deliberately causing any of the disturbances.

Like the others who came before him, Dr. Pratt was welcomed into the Herrmann residence and greeted warmly. He explained that he had come as an observer and he spent most of the time there chatting with Jimmy, playing cards with him, helping him with his homework and generally just being around the young man. There was no sign of strangeness during the visit. Popper was absolutely quiet.

Pratt then summoned another colleague from North Carolina, William G. Roll. Together, they interviewed the family members and were convinced that none of them were perpetrating a hoax. “The family was much too shaken for it to be a colossal hoax,” Pratt told a United Press reporter.

Things were quiet for the next several days, as though the poltergeist did not want to perform

for the scientists. Then, on March 2, one month after Popper first arrived, he decided to make himself known again. All of the Herrmanns were in the house to witness what took place. First, a dish vaulted from a kitchen cabinet and shattered on the floor. Then, a night table flipped over in Jimmy's room. Popper was back and yet there was still no explanation as to who, or what, he was. Two days later, a bowl of flowers slid down the dining room table and jumped into the air. A bookcase turned end over end in the cellar.

But this would not be Popper's farewell performance. That event would occur on March 10 while Mrs. Herrmann, Jimmy, and Lucille were getting ready for bed (James Herrmann was away on business). Pratt and Roll suddenly heard a loud popping sound in the cellar and they hurried downstairs to see what it was. They found that a bleach bottle, sitting in a cardboard box, had somehow lost its plastic lid.
For reasons unknown, this became the last act of the Herrmann family poltergeist. There had been a record of 67 recorded disturbances between February 3 and March 10. The Herrmanns had been visited by detectives, building inspectors, electricians, plumbers, firemen, parapsychologists and half of the "nutcases" on the East Coast and yet none of them had been able to present a satisfactory explanation for what had occurred in their home.

Weeks after the household returned to normal, "experts" still came to investigate and to theorize about what had taken place. As late as August 1958, the scientists at Duke still had no clue as to what had happened and why. By this time, the Herrmanns had had enough of investigations and just wanted their lives to get back to normal. James Herrmann no longer cared why the disturbances had taken place, he was just happy they were over. Mrs. Herrmann told an Associated Press reporter: "I don't think there is a definite solution. It was just one of those things with no rhyme or reason to it. But there was a definite physical force behind it."

What did happen at the Herrmann house on Long Island? No one really knows. "Popper" the Poltergeist, and the strange incidents that followed in his wake, is just as puzzling today as "he" was in 1958.

**The story of "Popper" and many of America's weirdest poltergeist cases can be found in my book INTO THE SHADOWS, which is available in print on the website at and as a Kindle edition!**

Posted by Troy Taylor at 10:13 AM
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# Prehistoric 'Stonehenge' monument in Golan Heights fuels mystery

jpost.com

By REUTERS \

11/11/2015 17:53

**No one knows who built it - some think it might have been a nomadic civilization that settled the area. Or, there could be an astrological significance.**

Driving past it, one of the most mysterious structures in the Middle East is easy to miss. The prehistoric stone monument went unnoticed for centuries in a bare expanse of field on the Golan Heights.

After Israel captured the territory from Syria in a 1967 war, archaeologists studying an aerial survey spotted a pattern of stone circles not visible from the ground. Subsequent excavations revealed it was one of the oldest and largest structures in the region.

Known as Rujm el-Hiri in Arabic, meaning the "stone heap of the wild cat", the complex has five concentric circles, the largest more than 500 feet (152 m) wide, and a massive burial chamber in the middle. Its Hebrew name Gilgal Refaim, or "wheel of giants", refers to an ancient race of giants mentioned in the Bible.

It is up to 5,000 years old, according to most estimates, making it a contemporary of England's Stonehenge. Unlike the more famous monument built with about 100 huge stones topped by lintels, the Golan structure is made of piles of thousands of smaller basalt rocks that together weigh over 40,000 tons.

"It's an enigmatic site. We have bits of information, but not the whole picture," said Uri Berger, an expert on megalithic tombs with the Israel Antiquities Authority.

"Scientists come and are amazed by the site and think up their own theories."

No one knows who built it, he said. Some think it might have been a nomadic civilization that settled the area, but it would have required a tremendous support network that itinerants might not have had.

There could be an astrological significance. On the shortest and longest days of the year - the June and December solstices - the sunrise lines up with openings in the rocks, he said.

Standing on the ground inside the complex, it looks like a labyrinth of crumbling stone walls overgrown with weeds. From on top of the five-meter-high burial mound, it is possible to make out a circular pattern. Only from the air does the impressive shape of a massive bull's-eye clearly emerge.

Shards of pottery and flint tools were found in various excavations to help date the site, Berger said. Scholars generally agree that construction started as early as 3,500 BC and

other parts may have been added to over the next two thousand years.

The complex is in an area now used for training by Israel's military, but visitors can explore the walls and crawl into the 20-foot-long burial chamber on weekends and holidays.

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I Am LTC BUZBY, PROJECT MANAGER FOk INSCOM PROJECT CENTER LANE. I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO my DEPUTY, BILL RAY, AND MY OPERATIONS OFFICER, FkED ATWATER. THE PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEFING IS TO ORIENT YOU TO A UNIQUE INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION PROJECT THAT USES THE CENTER LANE TECHNIQUE,( I WILL DISCUSS THE HISTORY OF THE PROGkAM, TRAINING',' OPERATIONS; AND OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTUkC~-' FOLLOWING THE BRIEFING. I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU A TOUR OF OUR OPERATIONAL BUILDING, THE OVERALL CLASSIFICATION OF THE BRIEFING is SECRET',, CENTER LANE LEVEL 4.
Sip,,, CENTER LANE IS A REGISTERED DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY SPECIAL ACCESS PROGRAM, I'HAT STATUS AND THE SENSITIVITY OF THE CENTER LANE MISSION kEQUIRE US TO ADHERE TO STRICT SECURITY PROCEDURES.,' As PART OF THOSE PROCEDURES, WE ASK ALL PERSONNEL WHO RECEIVE A CENTER LANE BRIEFING 1-0 COMPLETE A SECURITY bkIEFING CERTIFICATE THAT ACKNOWLEDGES AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE SENSITIVITY OF CENTER LANE INFORMATION, GENTLEMEN,' I HAVE A RECORD THAT YOU COMPLETED THE CERTIFICATES WHEN YOU REVIEWED THE CENIEK LANE PkOJECT WITH LTC FOX IN I-ATE JANUARY 19-84.
(CHART 1) SIR.,~ THE INSCOM CENTER LANE PROJECT INVOLVES THE USE OF PSYCHOENEkGETICS FOR INTELLIGENCE PURPOSES. PSYCHOENERGETICS AkE THE PROCESSES BY WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL MAY PSYCHICALLY INTERACT WITH OBJECTS'i' LOCATIONS/ ORGANISMS OR EVENTS. THIS INCLUDES SUCH DISCIPLINES AS PSYCHOKENESIS, REMOTE VIEWING, AND REMOTE COMMUNICATIONS,
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]FIE CEN'IER LANE MISSION IS TO USE PSCHO ENEkGETICS To ENHANCE OTHEk INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION SYSTEMS; THAT is SIGINT., IMINI, AND HUMINI, OUR MISSION IS AS SHOWN ON THE NEXT CHART.
CONDUCT INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND COUNTER INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS U71LIZING ALL PSYCHOENERGETIC PROCESSES APPLICABLE.
IRAIN SELECTED PERSONNEL IN STATE-OF-THE-ART PSYChOENERGETIC INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND COUNTER INTELL IGENCE TECHNIQUES,
EXPAND OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES AND I-RAINING BEYOND IHE CONFINES OF INFORMATION COLLECTION INTO THE FIELDS OF PSYCHOENERGETIC COMMUNICATION AND PSYCHOKENESIS.
_1HE US ARmy!s INTEREST IN PSYCHOENERGETICS GOES BACK TO 1972, WHEN THE SURGEON GENERAL THROUGH THE MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE INFOkMATION AGENCY (MIIA), TOGETHER WITH DIA, PUBLISHED STUDIES OF SOVIET BLOCK WORK.' IN 1976,"THE MISSILE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (MIA) INFORMALLY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN US REPLICATION OF CLAIMED SOVIET EXPERIMENTS IN PSYCHOKENES19.,' SRI DEVELOPED A SMALL PROGRAM FOR THEM AND IN AUGUST 1977, MIA AWARDED SRI AN $80K ONE-YEAR R&D CONTRACT..' DURING THE SAME TIME,' ANOTHER DARCOM
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AGENCY," THE ARmy MATERIAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AGENCY WAS INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION OF kEMOTE VIEWING CONCEPTS WITH SRI.' 1hESE

EFFORTS CONTINUED THROUGH FY 1980.' IN MARCH 1980, WILLIAM J. PLkRY.,` THEN UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING,' ORDERED CURTAILMENT OF ALL P6 MONIES SUPPORTING THE PkUGRAM;-bUT POSED i~o OBJECTION TO CONTINUANCE OF NON-R&D INTELLIGENCE APPLICATIONS EFFORTS".' THIS ACTION EVENTUALLY CAUSED DARCOM TO CEASE ALL ACTIVITY.,
~CHART CHANGE) THE US ARMY INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMAND'S INVOLVEMENT WITH PSYCHOENERGETICS BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER 1977. AT THAT TIME,` AN INSCOM ELEMENT IMPLEMENTED THE GONDOLA WISH PROGRAM WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO INTEGRATE THE SOVIET AND EAST EuROPEAN PSYCHOENERGETIC INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION THREAT INTO THE ACL---SOURCE OPERATIONS SECURITY (OPSEC) SUPPORT SCENARJO.
bY SPRING OF 1978,,THE ARMY ACS1 CONCLUDED THERE WAS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO WARRANT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO EXPLORE MILITARY APPLICATIONS OF PSYCHOENERGETICS. HE CANCELLED THE GONDOLA WISH EFFOkTi PLACED A COMPLETE SECURITY ENVELOPE OVER ARmY's INTEREST IN PSYCHOENERGETICS, AND IMPLEMENTED A NEW PROGRAM DIRECTED TOWARDS INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION USING kEMOTE VIEWING'. " THE NEW EFFORT WAS GIVEN THE UNC'LASSIFIED NICKNAME GRILL FLAME. IN OCTOBER 1978,, ACSI TASKED
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INSCOM TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM USING PSYCHOENERGETICS FOR INTELLIGENCE APPLICATIONS UTILIZING REMOTE VIEWING. By SPRING 1979, ' PROJECT PERSONNEL HAD BEEN SELECTED AND TRAINING INITIATED. 1HE MARCH 1980 PERRY MEMORANDUM WITHDREW THE PROGRAM 6 MONIES SUPPORTING PSYCHOENERGETic R&D EFFORTS,' BUT I.T DID NOT PUT US OUT OF BUSINESS., IN 1981,' THE ACSI TRANSFERRED TOTAL M/~NAGEMENT kESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROJECT TO INSCOM. ALSO IN 1981,'A JOINT SERVICES GRILL FLAME COMMITTEE,'CONSISTING OF DIA, THE AIR FORCE AND ARMY WAS FORMED'.." -1HE NAVY EXPRESSED NO INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN ANY DISCUSSIONS, AND LATER THE AiF< FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF DIRECTED THAT THE AIR FORCE WITHDRAW FkOM THE COMMITTEE AND ALL PSYCHOENERGETIC PROGRAMS., THIS JOINT SEkVICES EFFORT WAS FORMED TO IMPLEMENT A 3-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE Pk,OGRAM DESIGNED TO DETERMINE THE OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS AND USEFULNESS OF PSYCHOENERGET1CS, AND ASSESS THE THREAT THESE. PHENOMENA POSED TO NATIONAL SECURI.TY, WITHIN THIS JOINT SERVICES PkOGRAM, THE ROLES OF DIA AND ARMY WERE DISTINCT. DiA WAS k&D ORIENTED AND INSCOM'S GRILL FLAME PROJECT WAS TO USE KEMOTE VIEWING AS AN OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUE TO COLLECT INTELLIGENCE AND TO DETERMINE IF REMOTE VIEWING COULD BE LEARNED BY PROFESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL WHO WERE NOT "ESTABLISHED PSYCHI,Cb - "INSCOM PARTICIPATED IN THIS JOINT SERVICES EFFORT UNTIL THE END OF FY 82 WHEN THE BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE (SENATOR WALLOP)
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CURTAILED ALL PSYCHOENERGETIC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE ARMY IN THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM (NFIP)-, 'THE CONGRESSIONAL CONFEk EES AGkEED, HOWEVER, TO LET DIA

COMPLETE THE THIRD YEAk OF THEIR EFFORT AND DIRECTED THAT FUTURE FUNDING -- IF ANY -- OF THIS PSYCHOENEkGETIC ACTIVITY BE BUDGETED OUTSIDE THE NFIP. SO IN THE FALL OF 1982, IN KEEPING WITH THESE CONGRESSIONAL DESIRES AND WISHING TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF EFFORT ALREADY ESTABLISHED, THE CG, INSCOM DECIDED TO CONTINUE INSCOM's PROJECT AND PROVIDE FUNDING WITH SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES (S&IA) MONIES, INSCOM TERMINATED FORMAL INVOLVEMENT WITH GRILL FLAME AT THE END OF FY 82,~'AND CONTINUED ITS EFFORTS UNDER A PROVISIONAL SPECIAL ACCESS PROGRAM NICKNAMED CENIER LANE.

NEXT 1 WANT TO PROVIDE YOU WITH AN OVERVIEW OF INSCOMI,q OPERATIONAL EFFORTS OVER TH PAST FIVE YEA,RS. (CHART ON) DURING 1979,-WE CONDUCTED 79 OPERATIONAL MISSIONS, 43 OF WHICH WERE DEDICATED TO ASSISTING THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY DURING THE IkANIAN HOSTAGE CRISIS. DURING 1980, AFTER WE ACQUIRED OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCL,'' OUR OWN SEPARATED FACILITIES, AND INCREASED MANPOWER,' WE WERE ABLE TU INCREASE OUR PRODUCTION TO 386 OPERATIONAL MISSIONS,~154 OF WHICH WERE STILL DEDICATED TO IRAN.' PERSONNEL LOSSES SUBSEQUENTLY RESULTED IN A SHARP DECLINE OF OERATIONAL MISSIONS~;~ A SITUATION THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS.

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OVERALL, IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS WE HAVE CONDUCTED MORE THAN 700 OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION MISSIONS. A CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF THESE (OVER 200) WERE IN SUPPORT OF THE 1RAN SITUATION, WHICH THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF RATED AS BEING QUALITATIVELY EQUAL TO THOSE OF OIFIER INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AVAILABLE 1-0 THEM.

BECAUSE OF THE TURMOIL THAT HISTORICALLY HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ThE PROJECT; 'WE HAVE NOT HAD A STABLE PERSONNEL SITUATION. (CHAKI CHANGE) IN 1 979, CG INSCOM FORMED A TASK FORCE CONSISTING OF 5 PERSONNEL; A PROJECT MANAGER, AN OPEkATIONS/TRAINING OFFICER, A SECRETARY,~ AND TWO SOURCES (RVEkSJ.i' IN 1980,' TWO ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL PEPSONNEL WERE ASSIGNED. By 1980,,' TWO ADDITIONAL OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL WERE ASSIGNED.~ by 1981, WE WERE READY TO EXPAND AND RECRUITED 2 NEW PERSONNEL FOk TRAINING IN THE PROJECT. BUT BY THE END OF 1981, PCS MOVES SEVERELY HAMPERED OUR OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY, HAVING BEEN DENIED NFIP FUNDING AND," THERE FORE,,~ 'A TDA UNDER THE GDIP By CONGRESSIONAL ACTIO'N,' CG, INSCOM HAS PROVIDED OUT-OF-HIDE PERSONNEL SPACES IN SUPPORT OF CENTER LANE SINCE THE LOSS OF THIS FUNDING AT THE END OF FY 82.1 THE FY 85 GDIP INITIATIVE WAS POSTPONED IN LATE AUGUST (29 AUG 83Y,. THAT MEANS CENTER LANE WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE WITHIN INSCOM AS A TASK FORCE WITHOUT A -IDA, WE HAVE SUBMITTED AN FY 86-90 POM SUBMISSION THAT WILL PROVIDE FOR A 20 PERSON OkGANIZATION, CURRENTLY WE HAVE 10 PEOPLE ASSIGNED TO THE ACTIVITY.

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u1L.u1'1L__F_
(CHARI' CHANGE) OUR MISSION STATEMENT REQUIRES US TO TRAIN PEkSONNEL 1'0 PERFORM REMOTE VIEWING, I-RAINING ACIUALLY BEGAN IN 1979,-WITH OUR IN-HOUSE EFFORT TO INTRODUCE SELECTED IINSCOM PERSONNEL 10 THE REMOTE VIEWING PROCESS, DURING 1979, WE INTEGRATED THE SKI CONTRACTED ORIENTATION IRAINING TECHNOLOGY INTO OUR '.('N7h(jUSE TRAINING PROGRAM WHERE IT IS STILL IN USE TODAY FOR NEW PERSONNEL. OUR IN-HOUSE TRAINING DEVELOPED FROM THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF STATE-OF-THE-ART PSYCHOENERGETIC TEChNOLOGY DRAWN FROM ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS,, 'SCIENTIFIC LABORATORIES, AND RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENTS AROUND THE WORLD. WE TOOK AN ECLECTIC APPROACH; USING THOSE METHODS WHICH HAD APPLICATIONS POTENTIAL 10 OUR OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.- IN-'HOUSE TRAINING IS COMPOSED OF PRACTICAL EXERCISES, LECTURES, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND OBSERVATION OF OTHERS., BY THE END OF 1980~,, WE BEGAN AN ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM USING THE HEMISPHEkIC SYNCHRONIZATION (HEMI-SYNC) PROCESS DEVELOPED BY ROBERT A. MONROE AND USED AT THE MONROE INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN VIRGINIA. IHIS TRAINING ENABLES SOURCE PERSONNEL (RVERS) 1-0 ACHIEVE STATES CONDUCIVE TO PSYCHOENERGETIC AWARENESS. IHIS ADVANCED TRAINING IS BEING FURTHER REFINED AND CONTINUES 10 BE USED TODAY. IN MID 1~82,, WE BEGAN A NEW TRAINING PROGRAM IN COORDINATE REMOTE VIEWING WITH SRI. THIS NEW COORDINATE REMOTE VIEWING OR CRV TRAINING PROCESS SUBDIVIDES
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THE DETECTION AND DECODING OF PSYCHIC IMPRESSIONS INTO DISCRETE, ACHIEVABLE SKILL LEVELS. IHIS PROCESS HOLDS GREAT PROMISE FOR REFINING RV AND GIVES US A METHOD BY WHICH WE CAN BRING NEW SOURCE PER'SONNEL UP 1-0 AN OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE LEVEL WITH MlNIMAL DRAIN ON OUR LIMITED IN-HOUSE RESOURCES. WE CONTINUE-TO LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRACTORS TO ASSIST US IN MAINTAINING STATL-OF-THE-ART TECHNICAL EXPERTISE.
(CHART CHANGE) 1HE NEXT PART OF MY BRIEFING WILL COVER INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION PROJECTS,- THEIR SPONSORS, AND OUR SUCCESS RATLOS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ONE COLLECTION PROJECT MAY REQUIRE ONE OR MANY OPERATIONAL MISSIONS TO SATISFY ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION (EEI),'. THE IRAN PROJECT, FOR EXAMPLE, REQUIRED OVER 200 OPERATIONAL MISSIONS,
1N 19791 WE CONDUCTED 7 COLLECTION PROJECTS FOR, 4 SEPARATE SPONSOR AGENCIES-1 IN 1980,, ~WE CONDUCTED 41 PROJECTS FOR 6 SPONSOR AGENCI,ES. IN 1981i 'AS MANPOWER CONSTRAINTS BEGAN TO LIMIT OUR CAPABILITY, WE CONDUCTED ONLY 20 PROJECTS FOR SPONSOkS. IN 1982., OUR PRODUCTION FELL AGAIN 1-0 JUST PkOJECTS AS WE ONLY HAD ONE OPERAIIONAL SOURCE ASSIGNED. IN 1983,11, WE RECEIVED 14 PROJECTS FROM SEVEN DIFFERENT " CUSTOMERS it (USAINSCOM, CIA, NSA, ACSI, ISA, FBI/SS, SO FAR IN 1984 WE HAVE RECEIVED 6 PROJECTS FROM 3 DIFFERENT CUSTOMERS,
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IN SUMMARY,` OVER _1HE PAST 5 YEARS INSCOM HAS CONDUCTED 100 COLLECTION PROJECTS FOR A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT US GOVERNMENT AGENC1E~~.'' OUR SUCCESSES MUST BE EXAMINED FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES. (CHART CHANGE) OVER 85% OF OUR OPERATIONAL MISSIONS HAVE PKODUCED ACCURATE TARGET INFORMATION'. ~- EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT, APPROXIMATELY 50% OF THE 700 MISSIONS PRODUCED USABLE INTELLIGENCE. (CHART OFF)
LAST YEAR,' THE CURRENT UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RESEARCH AND ENGINEEI--,'ING SUSPENDED THE PROHIBITION AGAINST UTILIZING PROGRAM b FUNDS AND THE ACSI MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO USE THESE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE INSCOM CENTER LANE PROJECT. THESE P6 FUNDS ENABLED US TO EXPAND OUR EFFORTS INTO AREAS WHICH HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED OVER THE YEARS DUE TO LACK OF A SUFFICIENT FUNDING BASE. WE HAVE CONTRACTED FOR THE FOLLOWING EXPENDITURES IN FY 8~: (CHART ON).
PURCHASE OF BIOMONITORING EQUIPMENT TO BE USED TO DETERMINE PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES DURING THE CONDUCT OF PSYCHOENERGETIC TASKS.
DEVELOPMENT OF A STATEE -OF -THE -ART PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREEN ING/ SELECTION PkOFILE FOR USE IN IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL SOURCES'.i- SUCH A PROFILE WOULD IDENTIFY PERSONNEL WHO MAY HAVE
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SOME PSYCHOENERGETIC TALENT ON WHO COULD BE TRAINED. WE PLAN 10 USE THIS STUDY TO ASSIST US IN RECRUITING NEW SOURCES. FUNDS NOTED ARE FOR BOTH SRI AND SRI SUBCONTRACTS.
DETEk'MINE THE COUNTERMEASURES POTENTIAL OF EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY (ELF) ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION.i THIS EFFORT WILL EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY THAT CERTAIN AS YET UNIDENTIFIED ELF RADIATIONS HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON MENTAL STATES CRITICAL TO PSYCHOENERGETIC PERFORMANCE, THIS STUDY MAY ALSO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ELF ENVIRONMENTS CONDUCIVE TO OPTIMUM PSYCHOENERGETIC PERFORMAN.CE. THE LOGICAL FOLLON-ON TO THIS EFFOkT WOULD BE THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL COUNTER-COUNTERMEASURES ENVIRONMENTS FOR CENTER LANE SOURCES:, FUNDS NOTED ARE FOR SRI AND A SRI SUBCONTRACT.
DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW PSYCHOENERGETIC TECHNIQUE FOR USE IN "SEARCH PkOBLEMS.~ 11 OVER THE YEAkS SPONSOR AGENCIES HAVE ASKED US TO ASSIST IN LOCATING LOST OR MISSING EQUIPMENT OR PERSONNEL.- bECAUSE THIS IS NOT A CONVENTIONAL REMOTE VIEWING TASK WE HAVE HAD LITTLE SUCCESS AT PROVIDING TIMELY USABLE INTELLIGENCE IN THESE CASJ---S. IHAT.'S NOT TO SAY THAT INFORMATION WE PROVIDED WAS INACCURATE, JUST THAT IT WAS NOT DIRECTLY USABLE TO kESOLVE THE INTELLIGENCE PROBLEM AT HAND. IF IN FACT A NEW PSYCHOENERGETIC "SEARCH PROBLEM I/ TECHNIQUE IS DEVELOPED, WE
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WOULD ANTICIPATE TRAINING SOURCE PERSONNEL IN THIS TECHNIQUE
BECAUSE /I SEAKCH PROBLEMS" CONTINUE TO BE PRIORITY TASKS RECEIVED
BY THIS OFFICE: FUNDS NOTED ARE FOR SRI.
CONTINUAIION OF COORDINATE REMOTE VIEWING TRAINING AT
ENHANCED LEVELS FOR ONE SOURCE: FUNDS NOTED ARE FOR SRI AND A
SRI SUBCONTRACT.
INITIATION OF CRV TRAINING FOR FOUR NEW SOURCE
PERS(jNNEL:' FUNDS NOTED AkE FOR SRI AND A SRI SUBCONTRACT.
]HIS Pb MONEY WILL BE SUPPLEMENTED BY $235K INSCOM SMA FUNDS
WHICH WILL BE USED FOR TRAVEL AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS.
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## Prosecutor suspended after pulling gun on fake spiders

yahoo.com

October 30, 2015 12:29 PM

LOGAN, W.Va. (AP) — An assistant prosecutor in West Virginia has been suspended after pulling a gun and threatening to shoot fake spiders scattered around the office as Halloween decorations.

Logan County Prosecuting Attorney John Bennett tells media outlets that Chris White informed other employees that he is "deathly afraid of spiders" before threatening to shoot. Bennett says he was out of the office at the time but was told about the incident by shaken employees.

He says White assured him the gun wasn't loaded. Bennett suspended White on Wednesday, several weeks after the incident, because employees were still upset.

The spider decorations have been removed, and Bennett has barred anyone other than the agency's investigator from carrying guns in the office.

Neither the media outlets nor The Associated Press could reach White for comment.

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# PROVICENCE HEARLD SEPTEMBER 5TH 1872

The village of Peacedale was thrown into excitement on Thursday last, by the report that two graves had been dug up near Watson's Corner, on the shore of the Saugatucket River. The Circumstances are as follows: The family of Mr. William Rose, who reside at Saunderstown, near the South Ferry, are subject to the consumption, several members of the family having dies of the disease, and one member of the family is now quite low with it. At the urgent request of the sick man, the father, assisted by Charles Harrington of North Kingston, repaired to the family burying-ground which is located near Watson's Corner, one mile north of Peacedale, and after building a fire, first dug up the grave of his son, who had been buried twelve years, for the purpose of taking out his heart and liver, which were to be placed in the fire and consumed, in order to carry out the old superstition that the Consumptive Dead draw nourishment from the living. But the body was entirely reduced to ashes, except a few bones, it was shortly covered up, and the body of a daughter who had been dead seven years, was taken out up out of the grave beside her brother. This body was found was found to be nearly wasted away, except the vital parts, the liver and heart which were in a perfect state of preservation. The coffin was also nearly perfect, while the son's coffin was nearly demolished. After the liver and heart had been taken out of the body, it was placed in the fire and consumed, the ashes only being put back in the grave. The fire was then put out, and the two men departed to their respective homes. Only a few spectators were there to witness the horrible scene. It seems that this is not the first time that graves have been dug up where consumption was prevalent in the family, and Vital Parts burned; in order to save the living. A few years ago the same was done in the village of Mooresfield, and also the town of North Kingston, both of course without success.

Article is copied from the Preface (pages xx-xxi) Food for the Dead by Michael E. Bell 2011 Wesleyan Paperback Edition

# Religion in ancient Rome: what did they believe?

*Thursday 1st October 2015*



From Jupiter to Venus, Romans worshipped and made sacrifices to a multitude of gods and goddesses, believing that these deities could influence their lives. Here, Professor Duncan MacRae from the University of Cincinnati in Ohio explores the significance of religion in ancient Rome…



*Vulcan caught Venus and Mars in a net and shows them to the laughing Gods. (Photo by Imagno/Getty Images)*

"We Romans," claimed the great orator Cicero in a public speech, "are not superior to the Spanish in population, nor do we best the Gauls in strength, nor Carthaginians in acumen, nor the Greeks in technical skills, nor can we compete with the natural connection of the Italians and Latins to their own people and land; we Romans, however, outstrip every people and nation in our piety, sense of religious scruple and our awareness that everything is controlled by the power of the gods."

Cicero is hardly the only politician – ancient or modern – to have asserted that his people have a special relationship with the divine, but it is certainly striking that the evidence from Rome in his time (this speech was delivered in 56 BC) does reveal an incredible intensity and diversity of religious activity. The Romans lived in a world crowded with divinities, and they communicated with them almost constantly. Indeed, the following snapshots from Rome in the age of Cicero can show us just how the gods and their worship were woven into almost every part of the social fabric in the booming imperial capital…

## Triumph in September

In late September 61 BC, the Roman general Pompey returned to Rome following conquests in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East to celebrate his third and – although he did not yet know it – final triumph.

Rich treasures and a very large number of captives were paraded through the packed streets of the city; the general himself wore the cloak of Alexander the Great. It was, according to the later historian Appian, a dazzling celebration.

The culmination of this pageant was a sacrifice of white bulls to Jupiter Optimus Maximus – roughly 'Jupiter the best and greatest' [the god of sky and thunder and the chief deity of Roman state religion] – at his temple on the Capitoline Hill in the heart of the city.

In making this sacrifice, Pompey thanked the god for his support of Rome and demonstrated

the supposed connection between the gods and the military success of Rome.

**Watching the heavens**

In ancient Rome, religion could divide as well as unite. This next snapshot dates from two years later: 59 BC, the year in which Julius Caesar – Pompey's rival and eventual vanquisher – first held the supreme political office of consul.

Even at this early point in his career, Caesar was a polarising figure. The conservative Marcus Bibulus, who was his fellow chief magistrate for the year, used every tactic available to oppose Caesar's agenda. Having exhausted conventional measures to block legislation, Bibulus shut himself in his house and used the traditional religious prerogative of the consul to declare that ill-omens forbade any public business.



*Julius Caesar as dictator of Rome wearing a crown of laurel and holding a symbol of office. (Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)*

Supporters of Caesar claimed that Bibulus was misusing the ritual – they said the declaration could not be made from home; only in public. Caesar ignored the bar on public business and proceeded to pass key laws.

Some modern historians have argued that this episode demonstrates that the Romans manipulated religion for political ends and did not really take it seriously. In fact, I would say the row, which was still being discussed years later, shows that the correct, ritual observance of omens was considered so important that it could become the very centre of political dispute.

**Trendy Serapis**

Our third snapshot comes from the same decade as the snapshot previous. In one of his poems (Poem 10), the trendy young writer Catullus tells a revealing anecdote about himself and a couple of friends. Catullus was just back from a rich, Greek-speaking province in the east, where he had been a very junior member of the governor's entourage. Keen to make out that he'd done well in the provinces, he lied that he had managed to bring back a sedan chair and also the slaves to carry it.

The girlfriend of one of his friends saw through the lie, however, and decided to set a trap for Catullus – she asked if she could borrow the chair to go over to the Temple of Serapis. Caught in the fib, Catullus had to admit that the sedan chair really belonged to another friend, and complained that she wasn't being "cool".

The woman's destination is no incidental detail – the poet mentions it to give us an idea about her 'type'. Serapis was not an old, respectable Roman god, but a controversial one recently 'imported' from Egypt. We might compare the attraction of the cult to the fashionable adoption

of yoga and Buddhism in the contemporary west. By connecting her with this Egyptian deity, Catullus casts his tormentor as a trendy seeker of the exotic.



*Marcus Tullius Cicero, who in 56 BC delivered a public speech about Romans' relationship with the divine. (Photo by ullstein bild/ullstein bild via Getty Images)*

**Family matters**

Without modern medicine to rely upon, Romans turned to the divine in times of need: for example, a stone inscribed in c50–60 BC records the gratitude of a woman called Sulpicia to Juno Lucina, one of the Roman goddesses of childbirth. Sulpicia explains that her thanks to the goddess are on behalf of her daughter, Paulla Cassia.

It is safe to assume that Sulpicia had prayed to Juno while her daughter, Paulla, was in labour – perhaps a difficult one – with a grandchild.

**A letter to the underworld**

This next snapshot takes us beyond the walls of the city and out to the graveyards north of Rome. A woman scratches prayers on lead sheets at night, begging the underworld gods – Pluto, Proserpina and the three-headed dog Cerberus – to dismember her enemies: Plotius, Avonia, Vesonia, Secunda and Aquillia.

If the gods fulfil her wishes, she promises them a sacrifice of dates, figs and a black pig. To seal the prayer, she drives a nail through the lead sheets and buries them in a tomb – the conduit to the gods of the dead.

This appeal to the gods to harm enemies was a curse. Cicero was not thinking of this sort of thing when he proclaimed the piety of the Romans in 56 BC, but the principles underlying these prayers to the underworld are the same as those in the stories of Pompey and Sulpicia: the Romans communicated with the gods in prayer and sacrifice to maintain their favour and to seek advantage.

**The gods of Rome**

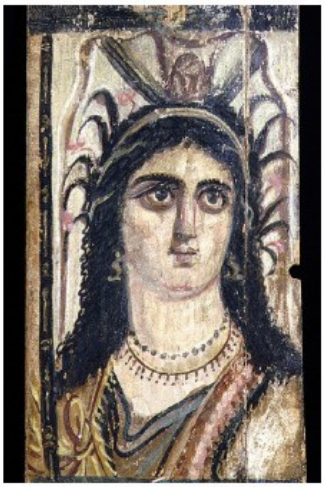
At the centre of Roman religion were the gods themselves. For us, this is one of the hardest things to understand about religion in ancient Rome. After all, few people believe in Roman gods, and we live in societies where scriptural monotheism [the belief in a single, all-powerful god] or atheism are the most common understandings of the divine.

For the Romans, though, there were many gods and little fixed doctrine. Although the Roman state focused on a few important gods, like Jupiter, Juno, Mars and Apollo, for individuals there were countless possibilities, including exotic gods like Serapis [a Graeco-Egyptian god] and Isis [the patroness of nature and magic, first worshipped in ancient Egyptian religion]; and more homely deities like Mater Matuta [an indigenous Latin goddess] and Silvanus [a

Roman deity of woods and fields]. The absence of scripture or a church orthodoxy allowed for a certain flexibility in how Romans thought about these gods.

Mythological stories about the gods, which mostly originated in Greece or in the old cultures of the Middle East, were very popular in Rome, and offered people the means to think through the nature of divine power. The stories did not always make the gods look good, but provided them with personalities and confirmed the possibility of their intervention in human affairs.

The Romans also conceived of the gods in visual terms, and worship focused on the anthropomorphic [human-like] images of the gods in temples and shrines. This had an impact: when the Romans thought about the god of commerce, Mercury, for example, they imagined him as a young man holding a bag of coins.



*Depiction of Isis with crown supported by uraeus. (Photo by Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)*

For an educated few, the gods were also subject to philosophical speculation. Sceptics maintained that the gods were unknowable but that cult should be maintained anyway. Epicureans denied that gods worth the name would be amenable to human sacrifice and prayer, but accepted that they did exist, while Stoics insisted that the world itself was divine and that the many gods were a manifestation of that 'world spirit'. It is, however, very difficult to find Roman sources that demonstrate atheism or strict monotheism.

We can imagine that a Gaul or Greek or Carthaginian, let alone a Jew or an Indian, might protest Cicero's claim that the Romans were the most religious of ancient peoples. Nevertheless, the Rome of Cicero's time was truly a place where the gods were a common and meaningful presence in the lives of people – ordinary, like Sulpicia and the curser in the graveyard, and extraordinary, like Cicero himself and Julius Caesar.

**Duncan MacRae is a historian and assistant professor in the department of classics at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. His work focuses on the history of the Roman Republic and early empire, particularly the history of religion and intellectual history.**

**To find out more, visit www.duncanmacrae.org.**

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But, satisfactory as this gentleman's view of the subject is, as far as the absurdity of the thing, and its melancholy consequences, are concerned, it still seems to require a closer investigation by tracing it to its origin, and to the causes that first produced it. As a decided enemy to every species of credulity and imposture, I should feel, therefore, particularly gratified if I could excite the attention of your readers to the subject. Some amongst them, with leisure and resources to pursue the inquiry, would do an acceptable service to the cause of reason, so degraded by such senseless visions, by undertaking, in a concise sketch of the origin and history of popular superstition, exemplified in some of the more memorable instances of its influence, to account for the real cause of that extraordinary credulity which seems still to retain such unabated power, not merely over the minds of the weak and illiterate, but, in a great measure, even over the understandings of the rational and reflecting.

*Dec.* 7, 1814. SCRUTATOR.



# Search for Secret Chambers in King Tut's Tomb Begins : DNews

discovery.com

Nov 4, 2015 02:07 PM ET // by Rossella Lorenzi



Tutankhamun's tomb and its contents, as viewed in a 3-D model. A corridor led to an antechamber and an annex filled with objects. The antechamber opened into the coffin chamber with King Tut's sarcophagus. The coffin chamber led to another small room filled with King Tut's treasures.

Rossella Lorenzi/Semmel Concerts

An investigation of King Tut's tomb to find secret chambers will begin tomorrow and will last until Friday, Egypt's Minister of Antiquity announced on Wednesday.

The announcement, reported in the Egyptian media, comes on the 93rd anniversary of the tomb's discovery in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor. On this day in 1922, British archaeologist Howard Carter found the entrance to King Tutankhamun's treasure-filled tomb.

A team from Cairo University's Faculty of Engineering and the Paris-based organization Heritage, Innovation and Preservation will investigate the tomb using infrared thermography.

The non-invasive search follows a claim by Nicholas Reeves, a British Egyptologist at the University of Arizona, that high-resolution images of the tomb's walls show "distinct linear traces" pointing to the presence of two still unexplored chambers behind the western and northern walls of the tomb.

According to Reeves, one chamber contains the remains, and possibly the intact grave goods, of queen Nefertiti, the wife of the "heretic" monotheistic pharaoh Akhenaten, Tutankhamun's father.

He argued that a painting located behind King Tut's sarcophagus has been wrongly interpreted. Egyptologists have always believed the scene shows Ay (who largely directed King Tut's reign and succeeded him) performing the Opening of the Mouth ritual on the boy king.

Reeves believes the figure labelled Tutankhamun is actually Nefertiti. He noted that a line at the side of the figure's mouth, called "oromental groove," is a trademark in pictures of Nefertiti. On the other hand, the figure labelled Ay would be Tutankhamun, completing the death ritual for Nefertiti.

Reeves speculated that the tomb of King Tut was not ready when he died unexpectedly at 19

in 1323 B.C. after having ruled a short reign of nine to 10 years. Consequently, he was buried in a rush in what was originally Nefertiti's tomb, who had died 10 years earlier.

An examination of King Tut's tomb in September revealed several unusual features, such as a contrast in the materials that cover different parts of the same wall and an extended ceiling which suggests King Tut's burial chamber was originally a corridor.

After the visual examination, Egypt's Antiquities minister Mamdouh al-Damaty agreed it was very likely that there were hidden chambers in the tomb.

However, he disagreed with Reeves on the Nefertiti claim.

An international team of researchers led by mummy expert Frank Rühli, director of the Institute of Evolutionary Medicine at the University of Zurich, also cautioned last month about the possibility of Nefertiti being the occupant of the secret crypt.

"Queen Nefertiti might be the already found Younger Lady," Rühli said.

Who Else May Be in King Tut's Tomb?

The "Younger Lady" is a mummy found in 1898 by archaeologist Victor Loret in tomb KV35 in the Valley of the Kings.

Nefertiti is labelled in inscriptions to be Tutankhamun's mother; genetic analyses identified the "Younger Lady" as the mother of Tutankhamun.

Such evidence would automatically rule out Nefertiti, the researchers concluded.

If a mummy is found, it could belong to the elusive pharaoh Smenkhkare, or to queen Meritaton, the full or half sister of Tutankhamun, they added.

It is also possible that nothing at all will be found behind those walls.

"The possible findings range from nothing at all or unfinished and closed corridors to storage chambers or intact burials with treasures," Rühli told Discovery News.

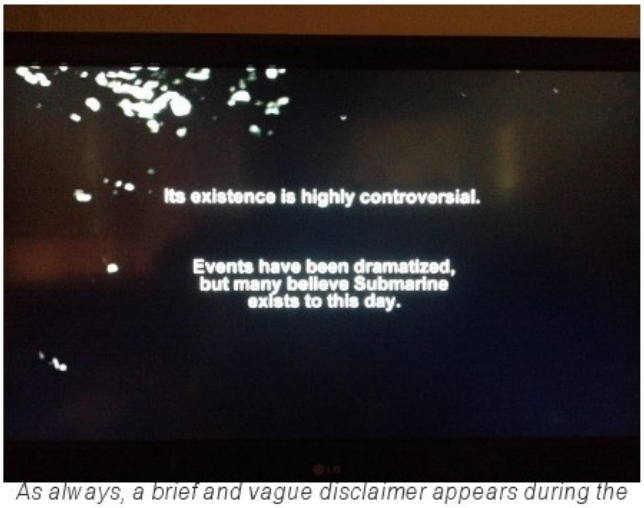
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# Shark of Darkness: Wrath of Submarine is a fake documentary



Shark Week has done it again with their Shark of Darkness nonsense. This show goes after everyone, from the whale watching industry, to shark cage diving, to South Africa as a country, and literally broke my heart to watch.




*As always, a brief and vague disclaimer appears during the show.*

The fake-u-mentary is supposedly based in Hout Bay, but continually shows a map of Dyer Island and Geyser Rock and refers to Shark Alley that are all in Gansbaai, ~100km to the east. So why would they say Hout Bay? If you google "boat capsized in Hout Bay", you will find that there was a boat which capsized outside of Hout Bay in 2012, killing 2 passengers onboard. This boat was capsized by heavy swell in the middle of the day and had nothing to do with a shark, let alone a mythical one. So I can only assume that Discovery Channel chose to include this very real tragedy in order to somehow legitimize their fake-u-mentary. This is horribly insensitive.




*Map showing distance between Hout Bay and Dyer Island.*

The shark Submarine is an urban legend from the 1970's about a large white shark in False Bay, **started by journalists** who wanted to see how easy it would be to fool the average newspaper reader. The Submarine shark then was reportedly "sighted" for years to come and the legend grew longer as the years went on. Everyone who has worked on white sharks has seen their version of the Submarine, but it does not actually exist. Think Loch Ness.

I am a Zoologist specialized in behaviour, and have just completed my M.Sc. from the University of Cape Town studying the anti-predator tactics of Cape fur seals in Shark Alley, Geyser Rock, South Africa. Not once did I meet the researchers Shark of Darkness: Wrath of Submarine features, because they do not exist. They are actors. However, Discovery Channel has done a bit of googling and came upon our real great white shark wound healing

Ok rant done. Im sorry but i have much respect for sharks and all things of the ocean to see such an amazing animal dis respected this way

Steele

28. **Elasmophile** says:
August 11, 2014 at 6:39 am

As a student of elasmobranchs since my work with Dr. Thomas Thorson (look him up, he's authentic and proved how Carcharinus leucas osmoregulates between salt and fresh water) this show made me sick. What has this Discovery channel become? "Discover the fake" channel? A better name would be the "Mythology Channel.." In actual science taking bits and pieces of factual information and crafting them into a knowingly false story is EXTREMELY disdained. People who do this are historically regarded as charlatans. While I like the concept of "shark week" as a legitimate means of annually examining the state of the world regarding these ancient and magnificent creatures, the Discovery channel has faked its way into profound scientific disrespect now and should no longer be considered a reputable source of scientifically valid information regarding sharks and perhaps other subjects as well.

> **John** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 8:02 am
>
> The sonar is what got me. They never saw him because he was still and vertical right? He would have had to swim into the sonars view first before he stopped and turned vertical. Yet nobody saw him on the way in? Insults my intelligence.

29. **Paul Freeman** says:
August 11, 2014 at 7:40 am

Michelle, I don't think my comments took the first time, so posting again. I'm surprised there is not more outrage amongst your colleagues at how The Discovery Channel seems to be more frequently turning into a tabloid journalism show at the expense of sound scientific study. I have no problem with occasional flights of fancy, but Discovery is heading down the path of MTV, which itself over time became less and less about music and faded into irrelevance. This is the second time I've blindly tuned into something seemingly interesting on Discovery only to find that scientific facts are distorted or outright fabricated in the name of entertainment. The first time was a "special" about the Megalodon. This is entertainment, not science. If I want this kind of entertainment, I'll stick to watching "Sharknado" on ScyFy. At least they don't try to label the cheesy stuff they're putting out as science.

30. **michael israel** says:
August 11, 2014 at 8:15 am

Also if you watch closely when they show submarine by the oil rig its tail fin is horizontal just like the tail fin of a whale.

31. **Kendall** says:
August 11, 2014 at 8:15 am

I watched this show believing that what I was watching actually happened. After all, this is the Discovery Channel not one of the major networks and their “reality” shows, right? It never ceases to amaze to what levels we will drop just to attract viewers.

32. **Gail** says:
August 11, 2014 at 8:18 am

I agree a total fake. They really had me fooled. Don’t they realize that u can check facts. On the internet. Did not seem right that they filmed this while people were supposedly dying. I am glad it was not true.

> **soy la verdad** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 11:25 pm
>
> same here, i was all into it crunching on my doritos and gulping down my ginger ale. got really hooked when i did find one video on youtube about the boat sinking. then, i started to do more research and nothing was coming up. then i thought, this is too much like blair witch and why would families give permission of their family members being devoured by a shark to be shown on t.v.? very, very disappointed.

33. **alisha** says:
August 11, 2014 at 8:30 am

Wow this is my first time ever watching shark week, and I was really excited while watching the show. That was until I tried to do some research on it this morning. I am really disappointed that one of my favorite channels would put stupid shows like this on. I want to see real facts and videos of sharks. Not this crap. Very very disappointed Discovery!

34. **crescent fallen (crescentfallen)** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:00 am

This was like a documentary on Jaws. The mechanical shark that was a blockbuster. I’m surprised they didn’t interview the shark to get his side of the story.

> **Rachel** says:
> August 13, 2014 at 8:44 am
>
> “I’m surprised they didn’t interview the shark to get his side of the story.” — dying!!!!!!

35. **Victoria** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:01 am

I really wish Discovery channel would stop putting out these mockumentaries. Very disappointing. I like how they say “events have been dramatized” which apparently is a sneaky way of saying “completely made up”. Boo hiss Discovery. You’re ruining Shark Week.

36. **Sandy** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:02 am

As soon as we started watching it last night, I told my boyfriend Donny… “Yup, looks like they did it again!! We Love Shark~Week, & would like to watch REAL Stories About REAL Sharks!!

37. **Gene Borish** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:12 am

What I discovered on Discovery was similar to The War of the Worlds fake radio broadcast by Orson Welles. At least that broadcast had a disclaimer at the beginning. I always thought that Discovery channel was a legitimate educational channel. I guess not.

> **soy la verdad** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 11:43 pm
>
> dolphins are the intelligent ones. about 2 years ago, in november, i was fishing for red fish in a saltwater creek just a few feet deep(maybe just above my knee) in my kayak. i heard water break behind me, when i looked, i saw two fins zooming my direction i just knew i was done for because jaws and his buddy were coming at me. it turned out to be two dolphins hunting the same fish i was after, it was an AWESOME sight. i went home right after that amazed but scared, i had sucked up my seat cushion. about 10 years earlier, i did see a shark feeding frenzy on the beach on the other side, also an awesome amazing site but….not as organized as the dolphins.

38. **Tighe** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:14 am

To be honest, the first thing I did this morning after watching “Shark of Darkness” was to see if the account was true or false.
Glad to see it was false because the show was disturbing to me. I can’t imagine a Great White shark having intelligence on the level that “Submarine” did.

Like most commenters, I have always enjoyed Shark Week on Discovery Channel. I was into sharks of all kinds since I was a child.
I have to admit between “Megladon” last year and now this…..c’mon this is the Discovery Channel, NOT tSci-Fy channel.

39. **marcus** says:

August 11, 2014 at 9:15 am

Is it bad if i actually believed this when watching it? I have always found the possible existence of 'creatures' and alien sightings to be cool even though Im 20. When i was watching there were a couple things that rang alarm bells in my mind that it might be fake. The biggest one was when submarine lept out of the water and grabbed that guy. Also it was weird how EVERYONE on the boat seemed to be prepared with a camcorder and compelled to film themselves and everyone else in b-style horror movie fashion before takeoff (almost like they were introducing a cast) also they just watched the shark lead the one guy out to sea and kill him. And would they really show real people dying on tv? I doubt it.

The whole program was a fear mongering production. Its odd since shark week seems so adament about peotecting sharks but so quick to fuel peoples fear and mistrust of them by showing countless shark attack survivor stories and creating fake shows about an unstoppable super shark hungry for humans

Thanks for the info.

40. **Sue** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:17 am

OMG!!! Fake!!! I was glued to my television and I kept running in the other room to tell my husband what was going on because he was watching a golf tournament. How STUPID am I????? I kept thinking "Why have we not seen any of this reported on our world news?" And now to find out it was all fake……what a waste of time!!! I will never watch another program from discovery with such gulliability……fool me once shame on you….fool me twice same on me.

> **Jenn Salcedo** says:
> August 27, 2014 at 10:14 pm
>
> I said the same thing to my Dad, why wasn't this a big news story?? But I also kept saying, these people seem like actors. Very disappointing Discovery!

41. **Latifah** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:17 am

Thank you!!! Its Megalodon all over again

42. **Jim** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:17 am

A very valid point by Michelle here. I sent a complaint to Discovery last year after that horrible Megaladon show and it's obvious they didn't care. There has been such a huge increase in shark research over the years you would think they wouldn't feel a need to waste their time doing something like this! It's a shame that an educational program has turned to this. For the second year in a row I have had to explain to my 9 year old son

that a Discovery show is fake, disappointing to say the least. Guess I'm going to change my channel to NatGeo and watch SharkFest instead.

43. **Paul Watkins** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:23 am

Thank you for that detailed explanation. I was looking forward to watching the documentary but based on your very factual report I will now not be watching. Appreciate you taking the time to put this out there.

44. **Stephen** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:26 am

Amen to all of that. Thanks for doing real science, and maybe the U.S.'s hideous appetite for sensationalist media will subside someday….

45. **Cody banks** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:35 am

As soon as they mention the joyride I looked it up within the first 30 seconds of the show last night I could not find anything to support their claims 25 minutes into the show I looked it up again all of a sudden there was floods of information but from the discovery channel no news channels. The same thing happened to me last year during the megaLeDon special about the boat in Hout Bay that was rammed from underneath by a giant shark they chose to believe as megaLeDon within the first few seconds few minutes maybe of the show I looked it up on the Internet there was nothing about it no newsclips no nothing a few hours later there were tons of sites dedicated to this sink. But anyways the show did exactly what they wanted it to it got the ratings they got the viewers that's all it was ever meant to do whether we like it or not they already got the ratings that's all that counts

46. **Mort** says:
August 11, 2014 at 10:22 am

What else can be said? These comments say it all as does this article. The megalodon documentary (Shark Week jumped the shark) stopped me last year during shark week. I went on to better activities. Watching this stopped me again. If I want to learn about sharks, I'll have to do it my self and not rely on Discovery to provide me information and sources. Even my sons no longer watch this.
As Michelle stated, there is so much shark science out there. I want to learn about that and not some made for tely movie.

47. **Barbara @ ww.allmylivesnow.com** says:
August 11, 2014 at 10:32 am

Thank God I found this article. Both my boyfriend and I are guilty of believing this disgusting show. We had our doubts, but being Discovery we assumed the researchers

were learning about the way sharks are evolving. What a disgusting joke. I couldn't sleep last night hearing the cries of the man who was being pushed out to sea by a 35 foot great white shark that was too hungry to eat him so was saving him for a midnight snack. I could just scream. I am so angry that Discovery thinks that fooling viewers like this is worthy television. I won't be watching any more and I hope that Discovery gets the bashing they deserve!!!

48. **Kyle** says:
August 11, 2014 at 10:54 am

The under water footage is from the deep water horizon oil disaster. They could at least use footage people haven't heard of. It clearly shows mc252 which stands for the Mississippi canyon block if rigs off the coast of louisiana.

49. **Bob** says:
August 11, 2014 at 11:21 am

I am done watching Discovery channel. With the mermaid junk, the megalodon farce and now this. I came in part way through the show and thought it was real for about 20 minutes, but not anymore. (Something about it taking hours for a rescue ship to pull a few people from the water was the first clue, then the shark misinformation.) There is a real problem with the destruction of sharks by fear, fishing or for their fins by people in Asia. Discovery channel no longer has any credibility and I will not be watching it anymore. Great job Discovery channel execs. I am sure that someone was promoted because of short term ratings increases, but the long term damage to your name brand will sink you.

50. **Kat** says:
August 11, 2014 at 11:28 am

Won"t watch Discovery ever again. Really fed up with fakes!!!!!!! The world is going to hell and you people think this is Cute!!!!

51. **Jeff** says:
August 11, 2014 at 11:50 am

I have to agree with everybody else. I too am VERY DISAPPOINTED. I would of expected this from other channels and quite honestly, now looking back, Megalodon last year I never thought was "real". I didn't really think Discovery channel was trying to make it be real, just a recap of "what might have been thousands of years ago". Guess others thought that it was real and possibly alive today…maybe like big foot or the lockness monster. I dunno. Never saw it, have no proof etc. The mermaids thing the year before…yeah pretty much the same thing, I never really bought into it. Ok now onto this year…I will say that with the Submarine show last night, it had me going at first. Right up to the part where the shark killed that woman and took down the big blue floatation device. After that things just started getting weird. The shark can float vertically and stay there like a harrier? hmmm. Purposely do this to avoid our sonar?

again…hmmmmmm…mmmmhhh. Push the guy out to deeper sea for a snack later on just because he is full and will eat again in 15 minutes? hmmmmm. All not very believable but when your wrapped up in it…you think…well? maybe?? Then you see the shark footage of it attacking and eating the guy whole. Ok nope….its FAKED!!! That's when it hit and I was like…yeah…been duped. All I can say is, I honestly deep down in my heart know that with the amount of money they spent to create this mockery, I could of in the year's time they had, made a much better and based upon true story shark feature. Sure you would have to "dramatize scenes" because it is very doubtful you would have enough actual footage for a full length hour or two feature, but this happens all the time. There have been plenty of shark attacks near Africa and Australia. This feature on Submarine or any shark for that matter should be based on the facts and if any ACTUAL footage exists, have that be included. If it needs a little embellishment to be added in to make it exciting, state it up front! Don't lie! Right before you show that part, just have someone say…"the following may be something like what we think may have happened but please keep in mind this is just our opinion". We can make very exciting features with awesome footage of real sharks with a little dramatization but don't need to make fake-you-mockeries. I hate it enough when these stupid Satirical (AKA FAKE!) internet sites "report the truth". Why does Discovery Channel need to go there too? Come on guys…if you need a director to handle keeping it together for next years Shark Week give me a call or write me an email. Oh yeah….the whole After Hours Shark thingy….excellent idea but badly done. Your host…can him…get somebody better. Talk about interesting and real stuff. Sure have some fluff added in but keep it somewhat rational ok? I mean seriously the dude last night…The human shark that will eat anything? REALLY? That's honestly the best you could come up with? You need someone better who will honestly put their heart and soul into earning their pay and making Shark Week all it can be. Whoever is in charge now…well I have voiced my opinion…you get it. Time to bring Shark Week back to being something the viewers wait for, for an entire year and not a joke to us or the sharks.
Jeff

> **erik** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 2:00 pm
>
> The shark submarine e never exhibited a heat signature yet the three caged survivors and the diver and the boat all did…what bullshit. I guess the television watching world is considered more stupid than I thought.

52. **KJ** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:19 pm

I'm disappointed!!!!



they had me fooled for a minute

53. **Willy the Q** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:33 pm

:-( Shark Week just disappeared from my scope of interest… shame, as I really enjoyed it's ideology.

54. **Maggie** says:
August 11, 2014 at 2:06 pm

I am so disappointed in the Discovery channel for giving viewers false information. I will now question all that they do! Shame on you!!!

55. **ben** says:
August 11, 2014 at 2:34 pm

If Discovery wants people to believe their shows they really shouldnt use actors that have been in several movies. Like the guy Boyd Roe I mean(mark elderkin). Who is in the movie Dark Tide with Halle Berry. And a few other movies. DISCOVERY show real sharks docs.

56. **Paul** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:51 pm

I so pissed right now. They put all this bogus crap on shark week and advertise it like its real. Very disappointed

57. **Moises** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:04 pm

And you guys didn't see the report on the Sharknado in the middle of Nevada, that's their next documentary!!!

Lol

58. **Adam** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:09 pm

I found it hilarious that they were showing "live tweets" during the show and ,of course, they were all positive… Couldn't help but notice there weren't a whole lot of them, though…I don't understand why Discovery doesn't realize that they are completely alienating REAL shark week fans by showing this garbage

59. **Nida** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:15 pm

I love shark week. I never miss it. HOWEVER, In The Past Few Years its become apparent that it's not as truthful and informational as it used to be. I think that since shark and human interaction is so rare, DC is often lacking in material for shark week, they "dramatize" or even make up events.
This is day 2 and I've watched one show. It's disappointing.

60. **Kristen** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:27 pm

It's really upsetting that a network like discovery, that has been regarded as being a reliable source for factual information and being at the forefront of bringing new discoveries and rarely seen life forms and events to anyone with cable tv, would now being lowering themselves to fake documentaries that have no basis in fact or scientific information. You would think that after 26 years of doing shark week, they would realize that people are genuinely interested in learning about sharks. Besides, it seems like so many programs they have aired in the past have focused on changing people's perception of sharks from viewing them in a negative ( mindless man eating machine) way, and working towards goals of conservation and cohabitation with sharks. Why would they air fake shows that portray exactly the opposite. I get the entertainment factor, it just seems that it goes against everything discovery channel is supposed to stand for.

61. **yakker** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:27 pm

Pitiful sad and irresponsible. The harm this one show will do to shark populations is saddening.

> **jh** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 7:16 pm
>
> I remember when Discovery was an educational channel. After finding out this program was fak, I can't let my children watch this garbage any more.
>
> > **Jane** says:
> > August 11, 2014 at 8:06 pm
> >
> > Pure exploitation and complete exaggeration of a magnificent creature, the great white shark. TLC is no longer a legit channel in my mind. What a shame.

62. **Brad** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:42 pm

Just complete bullshit. I don't want to watch fake crap during sharkweek. There is so much more out there to air. Megaladon plus mermaids, why even show anything real? I am so disappointed. Discovery should be ashamed. I can't watch, nor will make it a point to watch anymore. Discovery you suck!

63. **Sam** says:
August 11, 2014 at 6:44 pm

Ms. Wcisel, thank you for your article on this ridiculous show. I started watching it but quickly figured out it was another Megladon type show. What is wrong with discovery and animal planet too, are they both run by the same morons? One is named for

animals and shows no animal shows any longer and the discovery channel shows this garbage. I have a feeling that they are going to be making a sad discovery soon. That they have no more viewers. Their next show can be called Cancelled, Wrath of the Viewers.

64. **Kevin** says:
August 11, 2014 at 7:14 pm

I have filmed great white sharks off California for many years. I never have seen a shark larger than 20 feet.
Submarine shark ranks up there with Spinal Tap, Best in Show and A Mighty Wind as Fakeumentry films. I laughed the whole time.

65. **Margaret** says:
August 11, 2014 at 8:54 pm

I was very upset after watching this show. I couldn't understand why anyone family would allow this documatry to keep repaying there attack ! Now I know it's because it was fake . Very disappointied in shark week . Also thought last year megladon was real too . I'm done with shark week




66. **Jessica Regan** says:
August 11, 2014 at 9:00 pm

Unbelievable. If we wanted to watch a movie, we would have. We started questioning it when EVERYONE was good looking lol. I had just been saying how the jaws outlook is no longer, and people are now curious and excited about sharks. I am so disappointed in the discovery channel.

67. **Andrew** says:
August 11, 2014 at 10:53 pm

if I want to see some fake shark garbage I watch sharknado I mean seriously I've been watching Shark Week since I was a little kid now I have to explain the my little kids that this is fakeDiscovery Channel has really disappointed me again thank goodness for DVR I didn't waste two hours of my time

68. **Harry** says:
August 12, 2014 at 3:24 am

First of all, Michelle, Thank You for telling us The Truth.
Second: Discovery Channel-You make me sick.

69. **Michael Heffernan** says:
August 12, 2014 at 4:02 am

Truth be told, I was more disappointed that the production team behind this mockumentary didn't really swing for the fences and give us a scene where Submarine

research.



*Prop, recovering from a boat strike. http://www.dict.org.za/blogs/20·study-of-shark-wound-healing/*

Prop is a real great white shark that was wounded by a direct hit from a boat's propeller in Gansbaai, South Africa. This shark's injuries were first identified by the **Dyer Island Conservation Trust**. Prop's remarkable 9-month recovery was documented (**video**) and the results were published in **Global Perspective on the Biology and Life History of the White Shark**. Prop has nothing to do with Submarine – neither the real legend or the made up story Discovery Channel produced. None of the researchers who published Prop's recovery were contacted by Discovery Channel. Again, by including this real bit of information, Discovery is trying to legitimize their fake-u-mentary.

Shark of Darkness serves as yet another unsurprising disappointment. There is so much real shark science occurring that could be featured, why make something up?

*is a Zoologist specialized in predator/prey behaivour and the Scientific Communicator for **EDNA Interactive**. She has spent the past 4 years studying the behaviour of white sharks and Cape fur seals at Geyser Rock, 'Shark Alley', South Africa.*

Popular CultureScience | Propshark of darknessshark weeksouth africasubmarine | August 10, 2014 • 11:53 pm

1. **Austin** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:03 am

I was very interested in the story tonight on discovery and I found no evidence supporting anything they said. Dates, locations, facts, numbers, and so many other things that were said has no info to back it up!! Very disappointing!!!

**Pymethot** says:
August 12, 2014 at 8:47 am

At least it is good to know that there is still professional and credible expert like you to inform us

2. **Sean Laing** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:20 am

A total joke! Shit like wrath of submarine really makes shark week look bad. I grew up watching real, educational, and interesting clips on shark week! This fake drama is really disheartening and shows just how cheezy these producers are and the length's they'll go to ratings. It sucks!

3. **jason peterman** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:23 am

explodes out of the water, victim (and a large, industrial-grade buoy) in mouth, as Newton's 1st law of motion demands. Instead we got a viewing experience wherein a giant shark has, in addition to its many other newly acquired (and impressive) array of skillsets and tradecraft, developed a reverse gear which allows him to forgo with all of the messiness which a universal law of general applicability entails.

Also, way to be commitmentphobic Discovery Channel, last year Submarine was a relic Megaladon, and now he's been downgraded to just a fucking huge Great White. What gives? Did you guys forget to hire a script supervisor?

70. **Connie kehoe** says:
August 12, 2014 at 10:36 am

Sad very sad. I was so pissed I shut it off. Like there's not enough BS in our world, let's stick to the truth. Thanks for the disappointment Discovery!

71. **Marcia** says:
August 12, 2014 at 12:35 pm

I have to admit that I actually enjoyed the MOVIE. I even enjoyed megladon last year. I only wish they had tagged them as movies instead of trying to fool people, especially when using lines like humans are Submarine's favorite food. I thought the point of Shark Week was to dispell these myths. I miss what the Discovery channel used to be. Bring back the true scientific education programming that I so loved instead of naked people, motorcycles, and fake sharks, especially when real ones are so fascinating. I love Shark Week, but let's keep it real from now on, and if you want to show a movie, say its a MOVIE!

72. **Jackie dewees** says:
August 12, 2014 at 12:57 pm

Discovery you are losing respect and the trust of your viewers! My son and I have been watching shark week for 25 years..please don't end a family tradition!

73. **eward Barsh** says:
August 12, 2014 at 2:45 pm

Wow….I was flipping through channels when I began watching. They really had me sold on it cause of two reasons:
1) Its Discovery channel…I never
thought they would fake a
documentury…..
2) The Coast Guard was involved
And testifying to it.

To be perfectly honest
…I believe nothing else Descovery Can ell says now… they have discredited

themselves…their Producers should be fired…and me personally…. I'm boycotting that channel. I'll stick with the History channel for now on.
Three cheers for the History Channel…….
Hip..Hipp….HURRAY..!!!!

74. **Fenix Rezegera** says:
August 12, 2014 at 4:32 pm

Very true indeed, when I watched the documentary, and as I saw the supposed "submarine" I knew it was fake, it looked as though it was made by computer graphics and animations.

75. **Elasmophile** says:
August 12, 2014 at 9:10 pm

Scientists beware! The Discovery Channel will use you to put forward their fake stories for ratings. Consider the picture that these two recent reports show and when asked to participate in anything associated with this channel. Since they repeatedly do this without apology and clear intent to deceive the public which it considers ignorant to facts, all these people from the network execs to the producers on down don't deserve any scientific respect, time or consideration..
http://io9.com/shark-week-lied-to-scientists-to-get-them-to-appear-in-1619280737
http://variety.com/2014/tv/news/shark-week-nets-ratings-record-posts-highest-numbers-in-27-year-history-1201280268/

76. **Katherine Miller** says:
August 12, 2014 at 9:30 pm

I thought this channel was a learning center. But, now I feel like a fool for believing in it. Last year it was megladon, this year more crap. I won't watch shark week again and how do I trust the rest of your material?

77. **sasha** says:
August 12, 2014 at 10:25 pm

Why should I trust anything else produced by Discovery Channel now? It's disappointing to lose trust in a somewhat reputable source (unless ive been made a fool of all this time)



**Debbie Wolfe Webster** says:
August 13, 2014 at 10:22 pm

So much for discovery,makes you want to change the channel or better yet, turn it off and go experience the real world. Lession ? There's nothing new under the sun. (JACK OFF'S)



78. **Steve Sullivan** says:
August 14, 2014 at 3:52 am

I agree with everything you've said. This nonsense should be clearly labeled by Discovery as fiction. They're not doing sharks or science any favors by perpetuating myths. Though there is one thing I don't agree with that you said… I'm sure you meant your heart figuratively broke, as if it had literally broken, you wouldn't be here to write this. (And I'm glad you are.)

 **Andrew David Thaler** says:
August 14, 2014 at 11:41 am

You are incorrect. Literally is perfectly appropriate as a synonym for figuratively when used idiomatically. Language is a living thing.

Edit to add: we have received several pedantic comments regarding the use of literally in this piece. The above will be the only one posted.

79. **Andreas J.** says:
August 17, 2014 at 5:51 pm

Just saw the doc. Usually very critic to what looks fake..but "Shark of darkness" looks incredibly real and truthful..thx so much then for such a professional scientist to add some facts..thank u Michelle..especially for the revealing of the distance between the 2 locations mentioned in the programme…
Andreas from Sweden…

80. **Chauncey** says:
August 17, 2014 at 8:54 pm

It was obvious rather quickly that discovery had once again fed us another ridiculous B.S. Story.
Like the Megladon B.S. and the phony laughable Mermaid story last year Discovery has once again proven itself to be fraudulant and has lowerd its standards of providing fact based real life documentaries. What a shame and a waste of time.

81. **Kevin** says:
August 18, 2014 at 8:58 am

I thought shark week and discovery channel were meant to be informative??? I love most of shark week and even the shows which talk about REAL shark attacks. I think the 2 shows Megalodon and submarine are a joke. Although it is pretty obvious these shows are fake, it isn't hard to see that their ACTUAL footage contains digital sharks, this kind of stuff is irresponsible and is only meant to cause fear.

82. **Will** says:
August 18, 2014 at 5:23 pm

What an complete and utter disappointment. What the hell are DC thinking about airing a piece crap like this. It's so easy to do a quick search on the net these days, they have to know that something like this will be exposed as a hoax. Spreading milk or cream in

the water, please. Two men pulling a shark cage with four people with their bare hands! Even a quick search on the net was showing no shark victim “Craig Sheperd” in 2007! http://sharkattacksurvivors.com/shark_attack/viewforum.php?f=39
Shame on you DC!

83. **Kari** says:
August 19, 2014 at 8:12 am

I think Discovery Channel is reaching their lowest point in history. There are so many people watching this and thinking that this is true. The’re ruining the shark’s reputation. Nice way to collect you’re money Discovery, making people believe that this is true just for viewer ratings!!! While some people are terrified of entering the water just because they believe what they see… Disappointing!!! You should be ashamed of yourself. Stop making fake-u-mentaries!! And how about the families of those victims of that boat that capsized? How do you think they would feel with this mockery?? Way to go on p***ing the whole wold off.
K signing off from Belgium.

84. **Candace** says:
August 20, 2014 at 1:18 am

I really don’t understand the appeal of the mockumentaries. There was the megalodon one, the mermaid one, both of the “follow ups” to those, and this submarine one. What is the point? The irritating thing is that they present these farces as “controversial”. They’re not controversial any more than the existence of unicorns and the tooth fairy is controversial. (Maybe those will be the next ones they make.) These vague (and quickly flashed) statements intentionally deceive people who are willing to believe whatever they see on Discovery. There are so many people who really believe that these shows and concepts are legitimate and that saddens me. Discovery Channel used to educate people with legitimate programming and shark week was once my favorite week of the year but it’s become a complete farce and contribute to the miseducation of the gullible.

85. **Brittney Schafer** says:
August 20, 2014 at 1:20 am

I have quite become fascinated with sharks and once considered wanting to study them. This was a huge disappointment for me, as I really want real documentaries with true facts. Stuff like where Jeremy Wade caught a Greenland shark is much better than this. Plus, little is known about Greenland sharks, and discovery should spend more time on documenting stuff like that than making up things to lead people astray. Especially the young audiences. This false documenting needs to stop.


86. **Mary Bayless** says:
August 20, 2014 at 2:00 am

Man! I love Animal Planet & Discovery, but am very disappointed that these networks are hoping gullible people like me will believe. I feel a bit betrayed. Shame on you

Discovery!!

87. **BrySkye** says:
August 20, 2014 at 12:04 pm

@john Not just that, but the 'sonar footage' (pfft) clearly shows the shark swimming away afterwards.
…What, they didn't notice that earlier, before going through that old footage from the rigs?

Urgh, just so many things that make no sense.
Like, if that incident really did happen in 1996, no body thought to check the oil rig surveillance footage before now?
How this supposed horrific set of shark attacks happened earlier in this year, yet not a single media outlet reported on them as if shark attacks are never massively huge sensationalist news?

It gets worse though.
Discovery started sowing the seeds of this before Shark Week even started.
3 weeks before the premier, they created actual youtube accounts for both "Paula 84" and "Mel Thurmond".
The Paula 84 account (youtube.com/user/yachtorknot15) actually uploaded the shark attack footage in the show, weeks before Shark Week began.
Which was subsequently 'found' by Mel Thurmond who comments about wanting to know more about the footage and he's been doing shark research in 'that area'.
…Not that the video, nor it's description ever makes any reference to what area it was recorded in!
Whoops!

So, of course, we're led to believe this entire documentary and its core premise was all put together in less than 2 weeks in order to be the premier event of Shark Week.
After all, it's not like these things take months to make. Or that schedules are prepared months ahead of time.

In other words, not only is the show itself a load of rubbish, but Discovery have expanded the content onto social media AS IF IT WAS ALL REAL.
The show might have had a small disclaimer, but none of the social media content has any disclaimers at all!

There's no two ways about it. They are definitely targeting the more… suggestible viewers and providing external content that will further legitimise the show to people who turn to google to look up more information, or see the youtube video in the show and decide to look it up.

↳ **james lawson** says:
August 20, 2014 at 12:58 pm

Discovery is in my back yard filming their new doc “T-Rex lives, in Alaska!”…. next yr shark week will have “Megalodon vs Godzilla”.

88. **Robert** says:
August 20, 2014 at 2:31 pm

What’s bad is, last night animal planet showed both megaladon and shark of darkness back to back, guess they didn’t think that people would put the two together and realize they are talking about the same mythical shark

89. **BrySkye** says:
August 20, 2014 at 4:16 pm

Just a little more information on how this show was expended onto social media, because I’m really bloody concerned about it.

The shows Melvyn Thurmond also has an online blog, which you can find here.
http://submarinesightings.typepad.com/

Now you might think he’s been blogging since January. since that’s what the archives would suggest.
However, if you have a little look on the profile page…
http://profile.typepad.com/melthurmond

Oh… it seems on this page the user can’t edit the dates for when posts where made.
And the entries for January, February and March were actually all posted on July 17th.

Now you might be thinking I’ve delved a little too far into this and maybe I’m a bit crazy or something.

But the key thing here I would like to emphasise is that the youtube accounts and that blog make absolutely no reference to an affiliation with Discovery Channel, never mind any disclaimers.
These accounts can easily be found on google, indeed the first google result for Melvyn Thurmond is the typepad blog.
And they are completely separate from anything to suggest they have actually been created by the Discovery Channel as an extension a TV show.

This is surely getting dangerous in terms of how misleading its getting.
While the content is duplicated on the Discovery website, this is also out there on its on, with no kind of oversight or accountability.
It only serves to make people think the show features real people and covered real events.

Even the disclaimer was wishy-washy, only referring to the show as a dramatisation, which itself seems dangerously vague and misleading.

Mayday/Air Crash Investigation on Nat Geo shows dramatisations. They are based on

real events.
How can you have a dramatisation of events that never… actually… happened?

90. **Domnic** says:
August 20, 2014 at 6:24 pm

ppppppppppppppppppppp I'll NEVER watch Discovery Channel again. I wasted my time watching this garbage…. I want my time back…

91. **Dylan** says:
August 27, 2014 at 12:30 pm

It was a fun bit of fiction and I can proudly say I know that guy Dickie who got on the fake shark to attract sharks.

92. **Vincent** says:
August 31, 2014 at 6:30 pm

Did I just waste 138 min watching a fake documentory?

93. **Laurette Hanekom** says:
September 8, 2014 at 3:56 am

What an disappointment to find out it was a fade documentary! I'm so disappointed in Discovery Chanel for including a fake documentary on Shark Week!

94. **Fred** says:
September 9, 2014 at 1:56 pm

I'm just sad that they do stuff like this to "revive" the "legendary" jaws, the huge man eating shark that proved to be elusive and smart and a real danger to human beings, i'm sad because sharks will pay a huge price on these ridiculous fiction movies, specially from idiots that think this is real and will try to kill as many sharks as they can to "exterminate" man eating sharks, never underestimate the power of propaganda allied with stupidity.

95. Comments are closed.

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I can't believe Discovery keeps making these fake documentaries!! What are they trying to accomplish by this? It's such a disservice to their viewers and just bad for their reputation!!

**Michelle** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:00 am

I agree this is bullshit. Very disappointing. You would think after all the negative feedback that surrounded megladon last year that Disvovery would have caught on and realized they need to stop with the "fake" and focus on the real facts. And yes insensitive is correct. I agree with that viewer as well.

4. **Charlsie norton** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:52 am

I can say this is my first utter disappointment in Discovery Shark Week…..I cannot believe they would taint their reputation in this matter. This is sad….and I'm PISSED.



**Christine F.** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:15 am

I agree! I plan to study sharks once I complete my degree and it's shows like this that will make my job more difficult. I've loved how Shark Week has allowed people to realize that sharks aren't mindless killing machines or calculating murderers and this film is basically negating all of that. I want to protect sharks and these kinds of shows just make people want to kill them. Disgraceful!

**Jim B** says:
September 5, 2014 at 2:40 am

You mean to tell me that all that filming was fake? The people interviewed, the victims, all that was fake? I had been channel surfing and came upon it and I did say to myself, "Wow! Why didn't I ever hear of this" because Im a big CNN guy, well that little caption I saw but I thought it was just some small things, my wife even stayed up extra late and has to struggle now all day at work. They got me, and they got me good. Jim B

5. **Jay** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:55 am

Blair Witch Project of shark attacks.

6. **San Diego** says:
August 11, 2014 at 12:56 am

While watching this clip i was researching trying to find something , anything to support what i was watching…FAIL I'm so disappointed that Discovery would go this far, I look forward to shark week/ Fest every year in hopes of new footage since the last 2-3 years

was a repeat of the last…let me just say I'M DONE discovery this is so distasteful to create this especially since a real tragedy happened with the sinking of JOY RIDE and two human beings lost their life.

> ¤ **San Diego** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 1:05 am
>
> Also you had me until you said that submarine stopped and waited for the right time, and pushed the man further out to sea to separate him from the others, thats actually laughable , Orca's Yes ,Great White ….NOT !! Unbelievable discovery !

7. **Dutch** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:04 am

I just noticed that the "video" evidence of the cunning behavior of Submarine they showed is actually filmed in the Gulf of Mexico. It is Deepwater Horizon video from Mississippi Canyon block 252. You can see the location stamp from Canyon Offshore that operated the ROV's that shot the video. This is sad that such fake footage is used to gin up fear of these creatures.

8. **John** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:07 am

Terribly disappointing but expected…..which is the worst part.


9. **Christine F.** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:10 am

I look forward to Shark Week all year and this just ticks me off. I want to be a marine biologist and study sharks and it's shows that were made in the same vein as this that helped inspire me. To think of some kid watching this and taking it in as fact annoys me to no end. It's like a bad (bad being a relative term) SyFy movie without the actual entertaining bits. Sharks aren't calculating murderers! When did Discovery stop trying to educate and just propagate lies?

10. **Andrew** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:11 am

Thanks for posting this. I almost fell for it. With the somewhat obvious visual effects I doubted it. Not to mention the reality TV acting of the "pros." Why would so many people self document anyways?! But it really took the cake when they said it was possible that submarine WATCHED killer whales and learned from them. Lmao.

> ¤ **Michelle** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 1:44 am
>
> Yes! I too was lmao when they actually said submarine watched the killer whales and learned from them….what?? That about did it for me! Whoever came up with

that made up line of bull and felt it was viewer worthy should have known millions are going to realize he/she has no clue…..NONE!!

11. **Jason** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:19 am

Wow. Really. Again. I missed the first run because I was watching Last Ship and The Strain. Both are way more believable than Submarine. I thought after last year they wouldn't do this. What will it take? I love learning more about these creatures I have a healthy respect for and this just sucks!

12. **Rick** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:29 am

This is the most PATHETIC attempt to boost their horrible ratings. I understand the channel's desperation, wouldn't any show be scrambling and desperate when they keep having to show the same footage year after year. I can honestly say, just like Fonzie, they have really
" Jumped The Shark." Time to give it up!!!

13. **Andrew** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:29 am

Shark week… aka ancient aliens. If sharks were aliens. Shit, that'll be next.

14. **jen** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:39 am

To think I taped it so me and my daughter could watch…because we both find learning about sharks cool…but really pushing the guy out to sea that is just plain laughable and the sad part it their are people gullable enough to believe that shit.very disappointed

15. **ryan** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:40 am

There is some truth to base the story on. Compared to other parts of the world, the great white sharks in South Africa are quite aggressive, so I guess it is somewhat believable that the actions of the shark are plausible. I don't necessarily believe that people are the target prey though, as we are foreign to the sharks natural habitat. I always liked watching shark week, and if this story is a big hoax, then I guess discovery has some apologizing to do.

¤ **Robin S.** says:
August 11, 2014 at 2:32 am

It had me fooled at the beginning until they showed the shark on camera, you can see it's completely cgi. To say that it plans it's tactics to attack it's prey is so advanced and so well played…well you might as well just say it was one of the

sharks from the movie Deep Blue Sea. Even samuel jackson would say it was complete bullshit. So much for watching shark week. I am greatly disappointed just like a lot of other shark week fans.

16. **alex** says:
August 11, 2014 at 1:46 am

http://news.sky.com/story/997799/cape-town-capsize-briton-dies-as-boat-sinks

I believe this is the story that was dramatacized…not the insensative one you suggested

- **cubbiebeer1101** says:
August 11, 2014 at 7:38 pm

Yes that is exactly the story they copied. I believe that was an early report though because I've seen articles about the Miroshga that say 4 people lost their lives. But even if it was 1, how can u say using this story to make a fake documentary just so people will see that their was a boat that went down if they try to check isn't extremely insensitive to the actual survivors and their loved ones.

17. **Jerry Day** says:
August 11, 2014 at 2:07 am

Really disappointed in Discovery channel. I used to like watching Shark Week. Why make up a bunch of lies? Ratings? I'm done.

18. **chad** says:
August 11, 2014 at 2:30 am

This is absolutely disappointing…there should be no shark week if it continues like this. Two horribly fake stories back to back now in as many years. #donewatching

19. **Rey** says:
August 11, 2014 at 2:40 am

Believability went downhill after boat capsized. Why did camera pan away and then back when lady and flotation device got pulled under? Shark "pushing" man out to sea? Rescuer's dive to capsized boat seemed well lit outside boat and had numerous camera angles as if "staged."

20. **Kai** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:07 am

I am so pissed. I can't believe I jus wasted two hours of my life. Thanks "Discovery."

21. **Larry Sullivan** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:22 am

I kept looking for a disclaimer, and apparently I missed it, but when they started talking about the shark “Hovering” and studying people while forcing water through its gills without moving, I knew this was straight bull@hit. … It’s sad that The Discovery Channel would put money into a venture which is counterproductice to protecting these great animals.

22. **frederick** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:23 am

OMG! I thought it was real. Think Blair Witch all over again. The seemingly endless chit chat before the show almost made me give up on “Shark week”, then their seemed a glimmer of hope with Submarine. Now, I find out its all fake. I refuse to watch anymore of it. Bad enough theses sharkumentaries are all human attack centric. Now, they are also fake? Only good great white documentary I know of was done by PBS Nature series. It was titled “Red Triangle”. Wish they made more like that one.

23. **Adrienne G** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:30 am

Well damn. I’m not gonna lie. I read all of your comments and I was def The gullible one over here. Totally thought it was real. It stopping in the water with the little boy attack and the digital images from above looking down- had me played for a FOOL NOW! I grew up with Shark Week and if this is going to start being fake their stories and documentaries— well then Discovery has some serious apologizing to do to the public. Cuz that’s just messed up.
I know some parts did look fake and i know it even said some parts were dramatized…. But I believed it was real. 100%.
I feel so stupid now. :/

> **alisha** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 8:35 am
>
> You and me both. I totally thought it was real and it scared me to death. Now I am just mad and feel stupid.
>
> **Tina** says:
> August 11, 2014 at 5:12 pm
>
> I felt the same way last year when they showed the fake Megalodon documentary!!! Watched it, was totally amazed n scared shitless only to find out it was fake!!!!! I felt like a fool! Then last night I was fooled again until they showed the clip of submarine hovering near the oil rig and the light bulb came on! That’s when I started searching and was furious discovery channel would do another fake show after all the criticism from last year!! I’ve loved shark week for over 20yrs and they’re losing all credibility!
>
> **shelly** says:

August 11, 2014 at 11:42 pm

I'm right there with ya! I won't lie I totally bought that crap too. I did think for a minute that the shark pushing the guy out to sea was werid but I believed it, I mean after all it's the Discovery channel, they aren't suppose to lie. I feel robbed! And now that I read all these comments, I think back to that episode last night and wonder how stupid was I to believe that crap. Ugh! I love Shark Week but I don't want to be lied to, that isn't right. And then to take a real actual boating accident where real people lost their lives and make up some shity shark story, that goes above and beyond all inconsiderate things!

**teresa** says:
August 22, 2014 at 1:23 am

With Submarine, two others on megalodon and at least one other I'm pretty sure was at least partially bs, I'm disappointed and disgusted with Discovery. We watch shark week for facts not fiction. If we weren't interested in the truth about sharks we wouldn't watch shark week. No idea why they don't get that. I was ready to believe it because I thought I could trust them. Very sad.



24. **Cynthia** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:42 am

My first clue it was a fake documentary was the Emma footage – the shark supposedly dragged the floating device along with Emma? That floating device was huge. THEN they could not rescue the man who was being pushed by the shark's snout further out to open sea? Really? They couldn't rescue that man? The reality is it is human nature to try at almost any cost to rescue another human being. And yes, the shark pushing the victim? Really? By snout? Lol. Nah – it is shark's nature to just chomp! Then these 3 victims – survived on an air pocket in the shipwreck undersea after 4 hours under water? And the shark just knew they were inside the boat?? Please. And these four, along with the rescuer, survived 30 feet swim to the cage and managed to get out of the cage whose pulley got broken? Too cliff-hanger-ey, too movie-like, not documentary. The shark opening its mouth and ramming the cage? The reality is at least one of these four would have been attacked during the swim from the shipwreck to the cage. Another clue is that other sharks that were in the shipwreck area at the beginning suddenly disappeared – because they knew Submarine was coming?? Right.

I still enjoyed it because it was like watching a movie. But Discovery Channel is supposed to be about education, facts, documentary. Now they are going for pure entertainment, to compete with other channels for viewerships! For ratings. They need to stop competing and stay true to science and education. Discovery Channel – please change back.

**Sean** says:
August 11, 2014 at 4:04 am

Complete nonsense, discredits every other show they air. Since when is Discovery into SciFi, this was just as stupid as that Mermaid crap they did a couple years ago. They should start a new network for fictional shows if they want to keep producing this garbage, don't they understand their viewers watch their shows for FACTUAL entertaimnent.

25. **Izzy** says:
August 11, 2014 at 3:51 am

I'm so glad to find out it was fake my mother nearly had a heart attack while she watched it! She really thought those two people died she felt so terrible for them each time they showed the lady on the air device and the man with the ice chest. It only for sure made her never want to get back in the water. That ruined our chances of a cruise! So they goes our cruise for next year I can't convince her it's fake! Maybe those actors should contact her and tell them their ok lol.

26. **GEORGE TURNER** says:
August 11, 2014 at 4:15 am

Was this produced in Colorado? What ever the writers were smoking I would like some !

- **Beth** says:
August 11, 2014 at 11:37 am

Best. Comment. EVER!

27. **Max** says:
August 11, 2014 at 5:27 am

Im shocked….. What a pile of crap. I cant believe what i just watched

Sharks dont omg where do i begin… Learn from whales, stop and wait… Push people out to sea…. None of this crap. I wanted to be a marine biologist sooo badly when i was younger, i studied and studied, this make me sicks. To think that these animals will be hunted and killed until they are gone… Sick

The reprodutive rate of sharks wont recover from crap like this if people buy in to this.

Lets say for giggles that there is a shark out there this size, it would waist its time eating people, its food supply would be massive!!! Whales that we track would be gone left and right, not to mention larger prey. And the all the "video" footage? Omg did everyone take water proof cameras? Those would have died on water contact. And if a shark that size would have really hit the cage!?! The cage and everyone in would have have been blow apart due to the amount of energy that animals impact would have not to mention zodiac that was holding it. Ohh and let us not forget the brave men pulling the steel line with no gloves to bring the cage with 4 grown wet adults (one with gear) up. Looks like some one ate their wheaties.

# Shark Week is once again making things up

vox.com

Updated by Brad Plumer on August 11, 2014, 4:11 p.m. ET @bradplumer brad@vox.com

This week is "Shark Week" at the Discovery Channel, that magical time of year when shark scientists tear their hair out over all the misleading claims about sharks that get splashed on TV.

"the submarine shark is an urban legend"

Case in point: On Sunday, the Discovery Channel aired a two-hour segment called "Shark of Darkness: Wrath of Submarine" about a 35-foot-long great white shark the size of a sub that supposedly attacked people off the coast of South Africa.

And, surprise! None of this was real. As zoologist Michelle Wciesel points out at Southern Fried Science, the "submarine shark" in South Africa was an urban legend started by journalists in the 1970s who were *trying* to fool a gullible public. But the Discovery Channel didn't debunk the myth — instead, they offered up computer-generated images and interviewed fake experts with fake names (like "Conrad Manus") about the fake submarine shark.

The Discovery Channel did, however, add this slick disclaimer to its sub-shark fan fiction: "Its existence is highly controversial. Events have been dramatized, but many believe Submarine exists to this day." It's all made up, but hey, some people believe it, so who's to say?

**Shark Week has made stuff up before**



*Watch: what you need to know about Shark Week's fake documentaries. The Megalodon has been extinct for millions of years. Discovery Channel wants you to believe it's still out there. ( Sergei Illaryonov/Wikimedia Commons ) The Megalodon has been extinct for millions of years. Discovery Channel wants you to believe it's still out there. ( Sergei Illaryonov/Wikimedia Commons )*

This isn't the first time the Discovery Channel has conjured pseudo-facts about sharks out of thin air.

Most famously, last year's Shark Week featured a documentary called "Megalodon: The Monster Shark Lives," which claimed that a giant shark that's been extinct for millions of years is suddenly lurking in the oceans once again, possibly attacking people. This, too, is completely bogus. There is no evidence that Megalodons are still around. None.

At the time, the Discovery Channel offered a quick, weaselly disclaimer at the end that some of the events were "dramatized." But plenty of the show's 4.8 million viewers came away genuinely confused:

What's especially bizarre is that some of these documentaries about mythical sharks feature real-life scientists. How does *that* happen? As it turns out, there's an answer — over at io9, David Shiffman, a PhD student studying sharks at the University of Miami, reveals that Discovery Channel producers flat-out mislead some of the experts they interview.

"The Discovery Channel has mislead some of the experts it interviews"

One such expert, Jonathan Davis, took a Discovery Channel crew to go see sharks in Louisiana back in 2013. The producers never told Davis what the show would be about, despite his repeated questions. He was later appalled to see that his interview was featured on a documentary called "Voodoo Shark" about a mythical monster that lived in the bayous.

"In reality, Davis was barely asked about the voodoo shark at all," Shiffman writes. "His answers from unrelated questions were edited together to make it seem like he believed in its existence and was searching for it."

So there you go. There are a fair number of good and informative segments during Shark Week (I'm a fan of "Alien Sharks"). But in recent years, sadly, there's been way too much utter nonsense. The Discovery Channel claims that the event is great at drumming up public interest about sharks. And that's probably true! But it's hard to see why they have to make things up. Real-life sharks are extremely fascinating as is. Why not focus on them?

**Further reading**

- Craig Pittman of the Tampa Bay Times wrote an excellent profile of 29-year-old grad student David Shiffman, who tweets at @WhySharksMatter and has made it his personal mission to expose the falsehoods on Shark Week.
- Back in 2012, Juliet Eilperin wrote a very nice history of Shark Week for the Washington Post. This was before the Megalodon business — but even then, many conservationists were calling on the event to be a bit less sensationalistic about sharks.
- Christie Wilcox has a much, much longer takedown of Shark Week over at her excellent blog Science Sushi. Read it. Among other things, she notes that many scientists are now refusing to work with the Discovery Channel.

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**Tibetan Skeleton Dance**

By Charlie Hintz on October 15, 2014



*1925 photo of a Tibetan skeleton dancer*

The Skeleton dance is a sacred Tibetan dance ritual found in Himalayan Buddhist lineages. It is intended to reflect the transient nature of things, including states of mind and the body itself. The monk pictured in the above photo, taken in 1925, seems to be performing the dance known as *Durdak Garcham*, "Dance of the Lords of the Cemetery." The dance celebrates the liberation that comes from acceptance of our impermanence.

The skeletons depicted in the dance are Chitipati, a pair of lovers known as the Lord and Lady of the charnel ground whose dance represents the eternal dance of death, as well as the attainment of perfect consciousness. They are worldy guardians, They are typically depicted as skeletons, each with a third eye of wisdom, holding scepters made of human heads and spines in one hand and a blood-filled kapala, sometimes with a still warm brain inside, in the other hand.

The Lord and Lady can usually be distinguished from other skeleton deities by the crowns with five small human skulls, as well as the fan-shaped ornaments on their ears. They represent a "dynamic vision of death and transformation" and a "joyous freedom from attachment" rather than "morbid pessimism" as the imagery conveys in Western societies.



*Tibetan skeleton dancers performing in 1925*

**Tibetan Skeleton Dance**

Tibetan monks of the Drepung monastery perform the traditional skeleton dance in this video from the 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Some ritual skeleton dances are secret, having never been seen by the public. They are performed by *chod* initiates before they are sent off by their teachers to practice alone in cemeteries or other charnel places.

Thanks to the Cabinet of Curiosities Podcast for sharing these photos and bringing my attention to this fascinating tradition.

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by Steven Novella, Sep 26 2011

Spontaneous Human Combustion (SHC) is one of those classic pseudosciences that have been around for a long time – like astrology, Big foot, and the Bermuda Triangle. I put it in the same category as the myth that we only use about 10% of our brain capacity; it's widely believed, but no one really cares that much. It's just something people hear about and have no reason to doubt, so they lazily accept it. I did when I was younger (in my pre-skeptical days), you hear about it on TV and think, "Huh, isn't that interesting."

It's therefore a good opportunity to teach critical thinking skills. People's brains are clogged with myths and false information, spread by rumor and the media, and accepted due to a lack of having the proper critical thinking filters in place. It's disappointing, however, when people who should know better, or whose job it is to know better, fall for such myths.

Recently an Irish coroner concluded that a man died from SHC, and it is reported:

> The West Galway coroner, Ciaran McLoughlin, said there was no other adequate explanation for the death of Michael Faherty, 76, also known as Micheal O Fatharta.
>
> and
>
> The coroner said: "This fire was thoroughly investigated and I'm left with the conclusion that this fits into the category of spontaneous human combustion, for which there is no adequate explanation."

First, let's play a game of name-that-logical-fallacy. The core fallacy the coroner is committing is the argument from ignorance. The investigation could not find a cause for the fire, therefore here is the specific cause – SHC. The conclusion should rather be – we don't know what caused the fire.

The coroner said the case "fits into the category" of SHC – but how? Did it have any features that are known to correlate with gold-standard cases of SHC? That is what we generally mean when we say that something fits a defined category. It seems that the coroner only means – unexplained (back to the argument from ignorance).

The case is a good example of why scientists and experts need to have critical thinking skills in addition to their area of expertise. Knowing a lot of information about a complex subject area does not necessarily also grant critical thinking skills – knowledge of logic, heuristics, and mechanisms of self-deception. This is why scientists fall prey to magicians or con-artists, and sometimes even deceive themselves and take their careers down the rabbit hole of pseudoscience.

Let's get back to the argument from ignorance – someone might argue that it is reasonable, if no external source of fire is found, that we conclude it was therefore spontaneous. In medicine we sometimes make what is called a "diagnosis of exclusion;" once all other diagnoses have been eliminated, we are left with a diagnosis for which there is no positive evidence. But the analogy breaks down in two very important ways.

When we make a diagnosis of exclusions we are appealing to a known entity, whereas SHC is an unknown entity. For example, migraine headaches are often a diagnosis of exclusion. But migraines are a known entity, they are characterized by specific signs and symptoms, and we understand something about what causes them. We have identified specific physiological processes that are involved with migraines. We just do not have any diagnostic confirmatory tests that are sensitive and specific enough to be useful, so we rely on clinical features and ruling out anything serious that can have similar features.

SHC, on the other hand, has never been confirmed to exist – not a single case. The entire hypothesis is based upon the argument from ignorance, strange cases of immolation where the source is not discovered by investigation. I should note that many cases presented as SHC do not even fit this category as there are obvious external sources of ignition or fire, like smoking or fire places. But if we take the best cases, they are based entirely on not knowing what the source of fire was.

There are no proposed mechanisms of spontaneous ignition that even approach plausibility. There are no cases where a person spontaneously combusts while being witnessed, or cases where other animals (animals that do not routinely use fire) spontaneously combust. There are no cases of near combustion, where someone heats up for an unknown reason but does not reach the ignition point. Nor are there cases where someone combusts spontaneously but survives to tell the tale.

All we have are cases where a corpse is found burned, with fire damage to the surroundings, and no witnesses as to what happened. In many cases there are obvious fire sources. In other cases there are no obvious sources, but there are potential sources. In decades of investigating fires it makes sense that there will be the occasional case where the source of fire cannot be discovered. The alternative is to believe that fire investigators will be 100% successful in explaining every case they come upon, which is an unreasonable expectation.

This falls under, therefore, what I call the residue effect. For any frequent phenomenon there will be a certain number (a residue) of cases that defy explanation, just by chance alone, because there are quirky, unique, or highly unlikely circumstances. Very unlikely things happen all the time, given enough opportunity. It is therefore not only the argument from ignorance, but utter folly to conclude that such cases have a paranormal or fantastical explanation, rather than they are just unusual but still mundane cases.

The coroner in this case should have concluded that the cause of the fire was unknown, not that it fit into a non-existent category of SHC. But at least he provided another teaching moment for the promotion of critical thinking.

**32 Responses to "Spontaneous Human Stupidity"**

1. Jarvis Puttinghet says:
September 26, 2011 at 8:52 am

In the news article it states that the fire officers were satisfied that open fire in the fireplace hadn't been the cause of the fire. But the fire in the fireplace was lit when he died… So I dug a bit deeper and I found that the officers only said that the fire hadn't spread and hadn't been the cause of death. Michael Faherty was old and in ill health and would be easy for a spark from the fireplace to jump to a dead body.

- Jarvis Puttinghet says:
September 26, 2011 at 9:08 am

After reading the BBC article, I have one more thing to add. Ciaran McLoughlin defends his ruling by saying that the case is similar to cases mentioned in Bernard Knight's book.
But if you actually go and read that book, it turns out that Bernard Knight writes 'spontaneous combustion' between quotes and goes on to say that they seem to always occur near fireplaces and chimneys. Someone with such a low reading comprehension as Ciaran McLoughlin should not hold a public office.
Anyway, I think the basic point of Steve's article still stands, you can't say 'we don't know what did it, so it must be X'. But it took me only a few minutes to find these two very damning (for the coroner) tidbits and the article would have been much stronger with them. An important part of skepticism is to read more than just the press release and I'm disappointed that Steve didn't do that.

2. Retired Prof says:
September 26, 2011 at 9:25 am

For those interested in details about other suspected cases of SHC, check out Joe Nickell's article "Not-So-Spontaneous Human Combustion" in *Skeptical Inquirer* at http://www.csicop.org/si/show/not-so-spontaneous_human_combustion/

3. Steven Novella says:
September 26, 2011 at 9:28 am

There is also more info in the article I linked to at the beginning of this post.

Jarvis – thanks for the extra info. In my defense, it's Monday morning, I had to get to work, and I am still recovering from my 24 hour show over the weekend. :)

- Jarvis Puttinghet says:
  September 26, 2011 at 8:12 pm

  All is forgiven.

4. tmac57 says:
September 26, 2011 at 9:49 am

The BBC News had a more balanced view of this story:

"Retired professor of pathology Mike Green said he had examined one suspected case in his career.

He said he would not use the term spontaneous combustion, as there had to be some source of ignition, possibly a lit match or cigarette.

"There is a source of ignition somewhere, but because the body is so badly destroyed the source can't be found," he said.

He said the circumstances in the Galway case were very similar to other possible cases.

"This is the picture which is described time and time again," he said."

5. Max says:
September 26, 2011 at 11:35 am

"There are no cases where a person spontaneously combusts while being witnessed"

The Skeptoid episode on SHC cited a couple instances of "Spontaneous Human Combustion of the Second Kind is when the event is witnessed and we have accounts of what took place."

http://skeptoid.com/episodes/4258

- Steven Novella says:
  September 26, 2011 at 12:54 pm

  My point was that there are no cases of witnessed SHC – meaning that the witnessed account contains details that would provide positive evidence for the spontaneousness of the combustion. There are certainly witnessed instances of things, people, animals catching fire – but not spontaneously combusting.

  - Max says:

September 26, 2011 at 1:23 pm

What details would provide positive evidence for the spontaneousness of the combustion?

- Jarvis Puttinghet says:
September 26, 2011 at 8:12 pm

Personally, I wouldn't think any eyewitness account alone positive evidence for spontaneous combustion (or anything else for that matter).
On the other hand, if we can make pigs spontaneously burst into flame in the lab, under circumstances consistent with a domestic setting, then we're talking.

- Sheila says:
September 26, 2011 at 8:59 pm

I think madscientist wants to sign up to be your guinea pig.

6. Max says:
September 26, 2011 at 11:46 am

Does the residue effect apply to, say, the Casey Anthony case, where the evidence points to murder, but hey, it could be one of those residue cases with highly unlikely circumstances.

- Jarvis Puttinghet says:
September 26, 2011 at 8:34 pm

The evidence didn't point to murder. The only thing we really know is that Casey tried to hide Caylee's body and misled the authorities.
Some people argue that a normal person wouldn't have done so if the death had been natural, but a) Casey wasn't normal and b) even a normal person might hide a body if he thinks the verdict will be inconsistent with what actually happened.

- Max says:
September 26, 2011 at 9:20 pm

Joe Nickell would disagree.
http://www.centerforinquiry.net/blogs/entry/psychics_in_the_casey_anthony_murder_case/

So I wonder if skeptics have a low or a high threshold for reasonable doubt. Generally, even when people say they're 100% certain, they're right only about 80-90% of the time.
http://measureofdoubt.com/2011/08/17/calibrating-our-confidence/

- Jarvis Puttinghet says:
September 26, 2011 at 10:34 pm

Joe Nickell only really addresses the psychic thing in his article, and I am in complete agreement with him there.
Since he didn't really discuss the facts of the actual case, it's impossible for me to judge whether he disagrees with me because he knows something I don't, or because his picture of the case is coloured by the media frenzy or lack of information or something else.

- Sheila says:
September 26, 2011 at 11:05 pm

If you really want to know if Casey Anthony is guilty, find a bodytalksystems practitioner to work with her and you will have your answer. Psychics may get some of it right but are so unreliable and vague and cannot get all the information like bodytalksystems does. What a victory, this program is going to be taught in universities, you freaking skeptics will never have to guess again.

- Max says:
September 26, 2011 at 11:21 pm

Can they detect a person behind a screen without using any equipment? If so, they should apply for the JREF Million Dollar Challenge and win a million dollars.

- Sheila says:
September 28, 2011 at 11:48 am

People that are doing bodytalksystems don't give a crap about your million dollar challenge. That's only for greedy scientists.

- Beelzebud says:
September 28, 2011 at 1:04 pm

The Woo is strong with this one.

- Sheila says:
September 30, 2011 at 7:08 pm

And the Poo is strong with this one.

7. Max says:
September 26, 2011 at 1:53 pm

"But migraines are a known entity, they are characterized by specific signs and symptoms, and we understand something about what causes them."

We understand something about the cause now, but in the past we didn't. Same as with various syndromes like IBS and AIDS, and most autoimmune disease for that matter.

- Steven Novella says:
September 26, 2011 at 2:07 pm

And until we understand something about cause, it is always a question whether or not an entity is its own real disease.

Or are we dealing with a "garbage pail diagnosis" – which is the term used, essentially, for a false diagnosis of exclusion.

In essence, SHC is a garbage pail diagnosis for death by fire where the ignition source is unknown – an argument from ignorance.

We take diagnoses seriously, however, when they present with a fairly specific collections of signs and symptoms that do not fit an existing entity, and at least provide compelling clues as to a plausible cause.

What are the signs that a case of death by fire was spontaneous – other than lack of known ignition source? From the cases I have read they have little more than anomaly hunting, and the

anomalies are all over the place. And they ignore signs of external ignition.

In other words – there are no signs that SHC is it's own real phenomenon, and alleged cases that are witnessed or survived do not add any such details – so they are really just cases of people catching on fire, not spontaneously combusting.

If SHC were a real phenomenon, than witnessed or survived cases would probably provide some new sign that was specific to SHC and provides a clue as to cause. But we have nothing.

8. Sheila says:
September 26, 2011 at 8:57 pm

What are the chances that madscientist will spontaneously combust?

9. BillG says:
September 27, 2011 at 3:47 am

Wow, I must be out of touch with today's bunk. I thought SHC died with the Dodo bird and the Flat Earth Society – oops, aren't they still around??

- Jose the Paranormal Skeptic says:
September 27, 2011 at 7:43 pm

One can only wish.

10. Jose the Paranormal Skeptic says:
September 27, 2011 at 7:55 pm

I wonder what the coroner would have to say if you choked on a chicken bone.

"This death was thoroughly investigated and I'm left with the conclusion that this fits into the category of a failed attempt at channelling a chicken, for which there is no adequate explanation."

I fly out to the UK to live in less than three weeks. If I should meet my doom whilst traveling remotely close to this coroner's office, I hope the cause of death is blatantly obvious…..with detailed notes and possibly some diagrams.

- BSHistorian says:
September 29, 2011 at 6:48 am

As the Republic of Ireland has not been part of the UK since 1922, you have no need to worry.

  - Jose the Paranormal Skeptic says:
September 30, 2011 at 9:11 pm

You are correct. I'm visiting Ireland, Scotland, Wales and spending some time in my house on the north coast of Spain. I just left the specifics out.

11. Jason says:
September 27, 2011 at 8:54 pm

Another one of those "you cant prove it WASNT xxxx" scenarios so many believers fall prey to as I imagine Dr. Shermer points out in his new book (havent caught up enough on other books to pull it off the shelf yet).

- Sheila says:

September 30, 2011 at 7:10 pm

You need Dr. (lol) Shermer to tell you that?

12. d brown says:
October 7, 2011 at 6:09 pm

It's been shown that pigs can burn like that. Put them in a chair and all that was needed is a small fire that burns till it gets to fat. The Nazis used that to get rid of human remains. They had it down to a science. They would dig a pit, put just enough fuel in it and stack the bodies like a wood fire. The fat did the burning once it started.

13. d brown says:
October 8, 2011 at 4:30 am

think of a oil candle, to stay small it needs a wick

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# Slashing Throats for 170 Years: The "Real" Sweeney Todd



Oct**30** by The Chirurgeon's Apprentice



*SweeneyTodd*

To most people, Sweeney Todd needs no introduction, thanks in part to Tim Burton's 2007 adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's musical, starring Johnny Depp as the throat-slashing barber of Fleet Street. In the movie, Todd dumps the bodies of his victims into the basement, where their bones are stripped of flesh and made into pies by his wicked accomplice, Mrs. Lovett, played in Burton's film by Helena Bonham Carter. Those familiar with the movie know how the story ends. But what they may not know is that this tale is nearly 170 years old.


THE
STRING OF PEARLS:
OR,
THE SAILOR'S GIFT.

The story of Sweeney Todd first appeared in 1846 under the title *String of Pearls* in a "penny dreadful" (so named for the publication's price as well as its macabre themes). The original version of the tale centers on the disappearance of a sailor named Lietutentant Thornhill, who comes to London bearing a string of pearls for a girl named Johanna Oakely, on behalf of her missing lover, Mark Ingestrie.

After visiting Todd's barbershop on Fleet Street, Thornhill disappears, arousing suspicions amongst his friends that the barber may also have been involved in the disappearance of Ingestrie. Driven by a desperate desire to find her lover, Oakely disguises herself as a boy and goes to work for Todd after his former assistant, Tobias Ragg, is incarcerated in an insane asylum. Eventually, Todd's grisly activities are revealed when Ingestrie, who has been kept prisoner beneath the cellars of Mrs. Lovett's pie shop and forced to work as a cook, escapes through the lift used to deliver the pies to and from the kitchen. Todd, who is furious at Mrs. Lovett for allowing Ingestrie to escape, then poisons her, before he is apprehended and hanged for his crimes. Ingestrie and Oakely marry and live happily ever after.

But where did the idea for this twisted tale originate, and is there any truth to it?

Today, Todd is depicted as a barber in the modern sense. However, as a character, he would have been recognizable as a surgeon in Victorian London. Barber-surgeons—as they were known—provided a variety of medical services for their communities. Their services ranged from the mundane—picking lice from a person's head, trimming or shaving beards, and

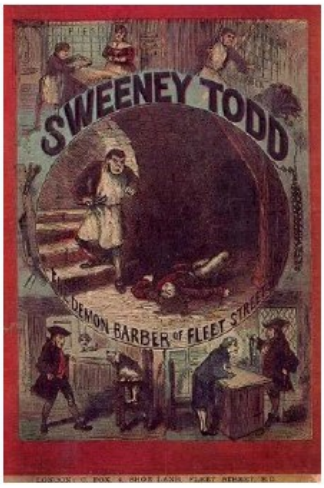
cutting hair—to the more involved, such as extracting teeth, performing minor surgical procedures and, of course, bloodletting, which is the origin of the red and white barber pole (click here to read more).



The barber-surgeons and surgeons existed separately until 1540, when Henry VIII integrated the two through the establishment of the Barber-Surgeons Company. Although united, tensions between the two persisted until they eventually split in 1745. Even so, barbers continued to perform surgical tasks well into the 19th century—much to the annoyance of their counterparts, who were trying to disassociate themselves from hair-cutting and shaving by the Victorian period.

The 18th and 19th centuries were rife with rumours about the dubious activities of medical practitioners, and even cannibalism, many of which tall stories originated as ways of slandering one's rivals. On 3 May 1718, *The British Gazetteer* reported:

> *We have Intelligence from Lincoln, that a man being hanged there* [at] *the last Assizes, within three days after his execution, a couple of apothecaries contracted with a butcher for a sum of money, to take the body out of the grave, and cut off all the flesh, fit for them to make a skeleton of; which flesh he sold for venison to an inn-keeper; who making it into a pasty, invited many of his neighbours to the eating of it; but sometime after the villainy being detected, the butcher and the two apothecaries were committed to Lincoln Gaol.*




Fortunately, many of these stories have never been substantiated, and it is likely that most of them were contrived by other medical practitioners to undermine the reputations of their competitors. Once out there, these rumours captured the imagination of the public, which continued to elaborate them into new and often more terrifying tales. Even Charles Dickens could not resist the idea of unsuspecting crowds consuming the fleshy meat of their fellow human beings on a visit to their local pie shop. In 1844, he published *Martin Chuzzlewit*, in which a character named Tom Pinch expresses gratitude that his own "evil genius did not lead him into the dens of any of those preparers of cannibalic [sic] pastry, who are represented in many country legends as doing a lively retail business in the metropolis." [1]

Of course, not all tales about cannibalism were fictional, nor were all forms of cannibalism rejected as socially unacceptable in earlier periods. The New England Puritan minister and lay physician, Edward Taylor (c.1658–1702), wrote that "human blood, drunk warm and new is held good in the falling sickness [epilepsy]." [2] In Denmark, the use of human blood as a cure for epilepsy was widespread: often, the sick and infirm would gather under the scaffold hoping to catch the spilt blood of a freshly executed criminal. English physicians, too,

believed in the curative potency of human blood, and recommended this “cure” to their patients as late as 1747. Other body parts–such as human flesh, fat and/or bone–were also used to cure patients of various ailments during this period. These parts were typically ground down to a fine powder and drunk or applied to the skin topically. [3]

Despite its popularity, however, the practice of medicinal cannibalism declined during the latter half of the 18th century as public opinion turned against it. By the time the macabre story of Sweeney Todd appeared in print, all forms of cannibalism were deemed socially unacceptable, making the tale of the demon barber even more compelling, albeit fictional.

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1. Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, (Digireads.com Publishing, 2009), p. 372
2. Edward Taylor, ‘Dispensatory’, Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts, Yale University Library, pp. 376-7.
3. For more on medicinal cannibalism, see Richard Sugg, “’Good Physic but Bad Food”: Early Modern Attitudes towards Medicinal Cannibalism and its Suppliers’, *Social History of Medicine*, 19:2, pp. 225-40.

This entry was posted in Casebooks and tagged 19th century, Adrian Teal, Barber-Surgeons, Barbers, Demon Barber, Halloween, history, lindsey fitzharris, Murder, Penny Dreadful, String of Pearls, Sweeney Todd, the chirurgeon's apprentice, Victorian London.

**2 comments on “Slashing Throats for 170 Years: The “Real” Sweeney Todd”**

1. The Weekly Index: 30th October 2015 says:
October 30, 2015 at 12:40 PM

[…] After 170 years, the ‘real’ Sweeny Todd. Spoiler alert – no historical proof has been found regarding the origins of […]



2. coldhandboyack says:
October 30, 2015 at 11:22 AM

Wonderful post today.

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# Bioarcheological and Biocultural Evidence for the New England Vampire Folk Belief

**Paul S. Sledzik and Nicholas Bellantoni (1994)**
***The American Journal of Physical Anthropology* No. 94**
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Many cultures have developed folk beliefs to explain the natural phenomena associated with death and disease (Aries, 1981). The folk belief in vampires, found in many cultures, incorporates interpretations of death and disease. The vampire image found in contemporary Euroamerican culture is based solely on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1983), an image that varies significantly from historic European and American vampiric folk beliefs. Eighteenth century European peasants believed that the appearance of the vampire in the grave (i.e., bloated chest, long fingernails, and blood draining from the mouth) meant that the vampire was draining life from the living. We now know these changes to be the result of postmortem decomposition (Barber, 1988; Mann et al., 1990; Micozzi, 1992). Further, the high number of deaths resulting from disease epidemics were also blamed on vampires. To stop the epidemic, vampires were sought out and "killed" by various methods (Perkowski, 1989). The term *vampirism* has also entered the psychiatric literature to explain pathologic behaviors similar to those of the mythical vampire, particularly ingestion of blood and necrophagic and cannibalistic activities (McCully, 1964; Prins, 1984; Vanden Bergh and Kelly, 1964). The clinical manifestation of erythropoietic protoporphyria, also known as Gunther's Disease, and its variants have also been cited as an explanation for the vampire belief (Prins, 1985). This autosomal dominant disorder causes increased excretion of protoporphyrin and results in redness of the eyes and skin, a receding of the upper lip, and cracking of the skin when exposed to sunlight.

American vampire folk beliefs, which were particularly strong in 19th century New England, contained some European features. The New England folklore is consistent in its incorporation of tuberculosis and examination of the body of the vampire for putative signs of life. Following the death of a family member from consumption (i.e., tuberculosis), other family members began to show the signs of tuberculosis infection. According to the New England folk belief, the "wasting away" of these family members was attributed to the recently deceased consumptive, who returned from the dead as a vampire to drain the life from the surviving relatives. The apotropaic remedy used to kill the vampire was to exhume the body of the supposed vampire and, if the body was un-decomposed, remove and burn the blood-filled heart or the entire body.

It stands to reason that the bioarcheological evidence of the vampire belief should be located in 19th century New England cemeteries. This report presents the analysis and interpretation of the grave of a supposed vampire from 19th century Connecticut, emphasizing the effect of the vampire folk belief on the bioarcheological record. This report also shows the importance of using historic documentation in the interpretation of skeletal information (Owsley, 1990; Sledzik and Moore-Jansen, 1991).

## SKELETAL EVIDENCE

The Walton Cemetery, Griswold, Connecticut, an abandoned 18th-19th century Euroamerican rural farm family burial ground, was discovered eroding out of an operating, privately owned sand and gravel business in November 1990. Unfortunately, the instability of the sand and gravel knoll preclkuded in situ preservation and necessitated archeological removal of all remaining burials. The skeletal remains of 29 individuals (15 subadults, 6 adult males, and 8 adult females) were excavated in the course of 1 year. Documentary evidence in land deeds indicated that the Walton family, who had emigrated to Griswold in 1690, had utilized the knoll as a family burial ground by the 1750s.

The pathological conditions observed in the burials from the Walton Cemetery reflect lives of physical labor, including osteoarthritis and an unhealed femoral neck fracture in an elderly female. One case of particularly heavy dental calculus was observed.

The complete skeleton of a 50- to 55-year-old male interred in a stone-lined grave is of particular interest for this report. Two observations regarding this skeleton are of note: 1) the postmortem rearrangement of the skeletal remains, and 2) paleopathological evidence of a probable pulmonary tuberculosis infection.

Upon opening the grave, the skull and femora were found in a "skull and crossbones" orientation on top of the ribs and vertabrae, which were also found in disarray. On the coffin lid, an arrangement of tacks spelled the initials "JB-55",

presumably the initials and age at death of this individual.

Pathological conditions evident in this skeleton included healed fractures and active infectious processes. Healed fractures were observed on the lateral half of the right clavicle (with a bony callus extending to the scapula), the right eighth rib, and the left second rib. Mild osteoarthritis was seen in most large joints and most lower vertabrae. Some lower vertabrae also exhibited Schmorl's nodes. The articular surface of the left femoral medial condyle presented an area of crenulated bone 30 mm in diameter, probably traumatic in origin. Focal lytic activity had destroyed an area of bone approximately 40 mm in diameter at the articulations of the left metatarsals and cuneiforms. Periostitis was present on the distal half of the left tibia and the distal two thirds of the left fibula. Periostatic lesions of the left second, third, and fourth ribs were also observed. These lesions were whitish-gray and pitted in appearance, and were located on the visceral rib surface near the rib head adjacent to the pleura. The lesions, respectively 30 mm, 35 mm, and 25 mm in length, comprise an area of approximately 30 cm mediolaterally and 45 cm superiorly-inferiorly when considered in anatomical position. The lesions are similar to those described by Kelley and Micozzi (1984) as most likely being associated with primary pulmonary tuberculosis.

Differential diagnoses for rib lesions include typhoid, pyogenic osteomyelitis, syphilis, pleuritis, and other types of non-specific chronic respiratory disease (Kelley and Micozzi, 1984). If the rib and foot lesions are taken as one entity, an additional differential diagnosis is blastomycosis, although this fungus is not normally found in Connecticut (Mann and Murphy, 1990). Periostitic reaction resulting from the fracture of the left second rib can be ruled out because the healed fracture shows no osseous activity around the fracture site, which is located 11 cm from the lesion.

Regardless of the specific infectious etiology of pulmonary disease in this individual, symptoms of a chronic pulmonary infection severe enough to induce rib lesions would have probably included coughing, expectoration of mucous, and aches and pains of the chest. Such symptoms, if not actually caused by pulmonary tuberculosis, would likely have been interpreted as consumption by 19th century rural New Englanders.

No other cases of tuberculosis were noted in the remains from the cemetery. Two burials are believed to be related to "JB." Both burials, a 45- to 55-year-old female and a 13- to 14-year-old subadult, were buried in a manner similar to "JB" and had the initials "IB-45" and "NB-13" spelled, respectively, in tacks on the coffin lid.

**THE VAMPIRE BELIEF**

To date, 12 historic accounts documenting vampire beliefs and activities in 18th and 19th century New England have been located (Table 1). These accounts are found in southern and western Rhode Island, central-southern Vermont, southeastern Massachusetts, and eastern Connecticut, and range in time from the late 1700s to the late 1800s. Eleven of the 12 accounts denote consumption as the cause of death of the vampire and any deceased relatives.

The New England vampire belief in based on a folk interpretation of the physical appearance of the tuberculosis victim and the transmission of tuberculosis. As the name *consumption* implies, the disease caused sufferers to "waste away" and "lose flesh," despite the fact that they remained active, desirous of sustenance, and maintained a fierce will to live (Brown, 1941). This dichotomy of desire and "wasting away" is reflected in the vampire folk belief: The vampire's desire for "food" forces it to feed off living relatives, who suffer a similar "wasting away."

The vampire folklore tradition is also consistent with modern knowledge of the transmission of tuberculosis. Many of the historic accounts indicate that family members living in close association became infected with the disease before or soon after the death of the "vampire." Tuberculosis is notorious for being transmitted between individuals of different generations living under crowded conditions, a situation common in rural 19th century New England farming communities (Hawke, 1988). Seasonal periods of low nutrition and the unsanitary conditions of 18th and 19th century farming compounds increased the opportunity for transmission of tuberculosis between family members (Clark et al., 1987; Kelley and Eisenberg, 1987). Although there is no evidence of tuberculosis in the remaining Walton cemetery skeletons, an 1801 narrative of Griswold history indicates that during the 25 years preceding the account "consumptions have proved to be mortal to a number" (Phillips, 1929).

**KILLING THE VAMPIRE**

The method of dispatching a vampire, also known as an apotropaic remedy, centers around the destruction of the vampire's body. In the New England folklore, if blood is found in the heart of the exhumed vampire, the apotropaic remedy was to burn the heart, in the process ridding the family of the vampire's actions. Most historic accounts indicate that upon exhuming the vampire, the body was found undecomposed and that blood was present in the heart. Barber's (1988) examination of the vampire belief in Europe indicates that the appearance of a vampire in the grave (i.e., bloating, hair and fingernails growing after death, the evidence of "blood" in the heart and chest) is attributable to the process of postmortem decomposition.

In the present case, however, the action is focused on the skeletal remains. Taphonomically, the physical arrangement of the

skeletal remains in the grave indicates that no soft tissue had been present at the time of rearrangement; no heart remained in the body. We hypothesize that, in the absence of a heart to be burned, the apotropaic remedy was the place the bones in a "skull and crossbones" arrangement. In support of this hypothesis, we note that decapitation was a common European method of dispatching a dead vampire, and that the Celts and Neolithic Egyptians were known to separate the head from the body, supposedly to prevent the dead from doing harm (Barber, 1988).

## HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

The final piece of evidence is this historic newspaper account (Wright, 1973): "In the May 20, 1854 issue of the Norwich (Connecticut) Courier, there is an account of an incident that occurred at Jewett [City], a city in that vicinity. About eight years previously, Horace Ray of Griswold had died of consumption. Afterwards, two of his children--grown-up sons--died of the same disease, the last one dying about 1852. Not long before the date of the newspaper the same fatal disease had seized another son, whereupon it was determined to exhume the bodies of the two brothers and burn them, because the dead were supposed to feed upon the living; and so long as the dead body in the grave remained undecomposed, either wholly or in part, the surviving members of the family must continue to furnish substance on which the dead body could feed. Acting under the influence of this strange superstition, the family and friends of the deceased proceeded to the burial ground on June 8, 1854, dug up the bodies of the deceased brothers, and burned them on the spot."

This account places the vampire belief in the Jewett City/Griswold area just after the time span of the Griswold cemetery. The excellent preservation of the vampire skeleton indicates that it was probably buried toward the latter time period for the cemetery (ca. 1800-1840), thus placing the internment of this individual close to the time of the above account. The town of Griswold was settled just after 1812, in part by emigrants from Western Rhode Island, who were, according to local tradition, uneducated and "vicious" (Phillips, 1929). Note in Table 1 that several vampire accounts are also located in Western Rhode Island. The Rhode Island belief was examined by Stetson (1898), who relates that the Rhode Islanders he interviewed did not consider their practice to be vampirism but rather believed it was a way to protect living relatives from potential vampiristic actions of a deceased consumptive.

## CONCLUSIONS

We present the following explanation for the bioarcheological and paleopathological evidence found in the grave in the Walton Cemetery. An adult male (J.B.) died of either tuberculosis or a pulmonary infection interpreted as tuberculosis (consumption) by his family. Several years after the burial, one or more of his family members contracted tuberculosis. They attributed their disease to the fact that J.B. had returned from the dead to "feed" upon them. To stop the progress of their disease, the body of the consumptive J.B. was exhumed so that the heart could be burned. Upon opening the grave, the family saw that the heart had decomposed. With no heart to burn, the bones of the chest were disrupted and the skull femora placed in a "skull and crossbones" position. This interpretation is based on three pieces of evidence: 1) the postmortem rearrangement of skeletal elements; 2) paleopathological evidence of tuberculosis or a chronic pulmonary infection producing similar physical manifestations; and 3) an historical account of the vampire folk belief from the same time and place as the skeleton under examination.

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# Spontaneous combustion a myth, says coroner

22.04 rte.ie

Friday 11 November 2011 18.03

A Donegal Coroner has described spontaneous human combustion as "probably an urban myth" at the inquest into the death of a 50-year-old woman in Carndonagh on 31 December, 2010.

Coroner Dr John Madden said when he saw the remains of Elizabeth McLaughlin, of 42 Close Padraig, Carndonagh, spontaneous human combustion did come to mind.

A garda described finding the charred remains on the floor of the sitting room with the damage just confined to the remains and the immediate vicinity.

The inquest heard from Harry Masterson, partner of Ms McLaughlin for the previous 12 years.

He had stayed with her over Christmas and then returned to his home in Moville on 30 December to collect medication.

Normally Ms McLaughlin would have rung him around 7am every day, but that had not happened and he became concerned and took the bus to Carndonagh on 31 December at 9.30am.

Dolores Loftus, a niece of Ms McLaughlin, had tried to get into the house when she heard the smoke alarm going off at 10.20am but she had been unable to get in.

Mr Masterson eventually gained access to the house with the help of a nephew who went in through an upstairs window.

Kevin Loftus described to the inquest how he smelled smoke and saw a dead cat lying on the landing.

"I kept looking for my aunt and I discovered two more dead cats lying on the floor," said Mr Loftus.

"I saw what I thought was a burnt Christmas tree lying on the sitting room floor and I kept searching for her and felt relieved she was not in the house. I let the others in the door.

"Dolores said in the sitting room 'there is her shoe'. It was then I realised it was a leg - I could not believe what I was seeing and I put everyone out. It took me a couple of minutes to get my head straight and then I rang 999."

The Garda and fire service attended and the scene was preserved and a video taken of the remains in situ before they were removed for post mortem.

Dental records and DNA from Ms McLaughlin's hairbrush were required to formally identify the deceased, Sgt John McLaughlin told the inquest.

"Inside the sitting room on the floor were the charred remains of a person. An unusual aspect was that the actual burning and fire damage were confined to the human remains on the floor and the immediate vicinity," Sgt McLaughlin said.

“The room was smoke damaged. I saw an empty vodka bottle close to the remains and saw two dead cats close to the remains."

Deputy State Pathologist Dr Michael Curtis conducted the autopsy on Ms McLaughlin however, Coroner Madden did not read it out, describing it as "quite graphic".

"There was a high level of cyanide in the blood stream and carbon monoxide in the atmosphere, which is not normally there. There was no anti-mortem damage. Death was caused by fire.

“There was talk of spontaneous human combustion at the time. I did a little research and that probably is an urban myth, but when I did see the remains, it did come to mind.

“There was little damage to the surrounding area. I believe the clothes acted like a wick on a candle - there was the complete destruction of the body but the fire did not spread," the Coroner said.

He offered his sympathy to Mr Masterson, who he said had brought happiness to the deceased.

Following the inquest Mr Masterson said he believed Ms McLaughlin had died as a result of spontaneous combustion and cited a recent inquest in Galway which made that finding.

"It seems to me to be spontaneous human combustion, which I know is unusual. It was just terrible. I would not wish it on anyone," Mr Masterson added.

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# Oklahoma Man Dies In Fire, Spontaneous Combustion Not Ruled Out As Cause

*SEQUOYAH COUNTY, Oklahoma -* newson6.com



*Photo of the deceased's home, from CBS-affiliate in Fort Smith, KFSM.*

The Sheriff in an eastern Oklahoma county said his office is investigating what could be a case of spontaneous combustion.

Sequoyah County Sheriff Ron Lockhart told News On 6 that deputies were called to a house on Bawcom Road, between Sallisaw and Muldrow, around 10:50 a.m. Monday. A neighbor had reported seeing smoke coming out of a home.

Lockhart said they found the nearly completely charred remains of a man in the kitchen, but that there was no other damage done to the home.

The man has been identified as 65-year-old Danny Vanzandt, according to CBS affiliate in Fort Smith, KFSM.

Sheriff Lockhart spent about 20 years as an arson investigator for the Fort Smith, Arkansas Police Department, before retiring to run for Sheriff in Sequoyah County. Lockhart said he'd never seen anything like it. He said it didn't seem that any accelerant was used and only the floor below Vanzandt's body was damaged.

Lockhart said his remains have been sent to the Medical Examiner's office in Tulsa for examination.

Lockhart said Vanzandt was an alcoholic and a smoker. But KFSM reports that Lockhart said Vanzandt's body was burned in a way that was inconsistent with the fire being started by accident, such as by dropping a lit cigarette.

The Sheriff said the investigation is still ongoing, but that he is not ruling it out spontaneous combustion as the cause of the fire.

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Spontaneous human combustion (SHC) is the alleged process of a human body catching fire as a result of heat generated by internal chemical or nuclear action. While no one has ever witnessed SHC, several deaths involving fire have been attributed to SHC by investigators and storytellers. Charles Dickens used SHC as the cause of death of a heavy drinker in his novel *Bleak House* (1852), fueling a popular belief that excessive drinking could lead to SHC. Responding to criticism that he was encouraging nonsense, in the second edition of *Bleak House* Dickens claims he knew of some thirty cases of SHC, but he mentions only two.* Both cases allegedly happened over one hundred years earlier. Dickens or his source probably got his information about SHC from stories collected by Jonas Dupont published in*De Incendiis Corporis Humani Spontaneis* (1763).*

One 17th century tale claims that a drunken German self-ignited due to his having imbibed an excessive amount of brandy. If drinking a great quantity of brandy or any other alcoholic beverage causes self-combustion, there should be many more such cases to study.

Many of the modern SHC stories have originated with police and fire investigators who have been perplexed by partially burned corpses near unburned rugs or furniture. They are completely baffled as to how a body could burn down to ashes except for a leg or a foot, while the rest of the room avoids being consumed by the flames.

Many of the allegedly spontaneously combusted corpses are of elderly people who may have ignited themselves accidentally. Some may have been murdered. Many are elderly women who may have had osteoporosis, making their bones burn at a lower temperature than needed for healthy bones.* Self-ignition due to dropping a lit cigarette or ignition due to another person are ruled out by some investigators as unlikely because they think the whole room should have gone up in flames in such cases. Even when candles or fireplaces present a plausible explanation for the cause of a fire, some investigators favor an explanation that requires belief in an event whose likelihood is extremely implausible.

**physical possibility of SHC**

The physical possibilities of spontaneous human combustion are remote. Not only is the body mostly water, but aside from fat tissue and methane gas, there isn't much that burns readily in a human body. To cremate a human body requires a temperature of 1600 degrees Fahrenheit for about two hours. To get a chemical reaction in a human body that would lead to ignition would require some doing. If the deceased had recently eaten an enormous amount of hay that was infested with bacteria, enough heat might be generated to ignite the hay, but not much besides the gut and intestines would probably burn. Or, if the deceased had been eating the newspaper and drunk some oil, and was left to rot for a couple of weeks in a well-heated room, his gut might ignite. And in each of these ludicrous scenarios additional oxygen would have to be introduced. These possibilities are so farfetched that I have no reason to believe they, or anything like them, has ever occurred.

Larry Arnold's theory that sometimes human cells are hit by a mysterious particle, the pyrotron, that causes a nuclear chain reaction inside a person's body is based on wild speculation and ignorance of cellular life and spontaneous nuclear fusion.* Some other theories without merit are:

> maser (microwave amplification by stimulated emission of radiation) induction, geomagnetism, and even kundalini (a form of yoga/mystic body heating). Perhaps the most preposterous suggestion is that stress can cause a person to burst into flames (perpetuated by Larry Arnold), or that hydrogen and oxygen remain as gasses in human cells and are thus highly ignitable – in which case the reader would do well not to inhale.*

A more economical and reasonable theory of how human bodies burn in rooms without having the entire room engulfed in flames is the idea of the *wick effect*. The ignition point of human fat is low and to get the fire going would require an external source. Once ignited, however, a "wick effect" from the body's fat would burn hot enough in certain places to destroy even bones. To prove that a human being might burn like a candle, Dr. John de Haan of the California Criminalistic Institute wrapped a dead pig in a blanket, poured a small amount of gasoline on the blanket, and ignited it. Even the bones were destroyed after five hours of continuous burning. The fat content of a pig is very similar to the fat content of a human being. The damage to the pig, according to Dr. De Haan "is exactly the same as that from supposed spontaneous human combustion." A National Geographic special on SHC showed a failed attempt to duplicate the burning pig experiment. However, it is obvious that the failure was due to leaving the door to the room open to the outside, which created a draft and led to the flames igniting everything in the room. Had the room been closed up, as are the rooms in which many of the elderly persons have died in fires attributed to SHC, it is likely that the pig would have smoldered for several hours without the rest of the room becoming engulfed in flames.

In their investigation of a number of SHC cases, Dr. Joe Nickell and Dr. John Fisher found that when the destruction of the body was minimal, the only significant fuel source was the individual's clothes, but where the destruction was considerable, additional fuel sources increased the combustion. Materials under the body help retain melted fat that flows from the body and serves to keep it burning. The reason some bodies are totally consumed except for the legs or feet probably has to do with the fact that these victims were seated when they caught fire and flames move upward. An alternative explanation is given by Brian J. Ford, who argues that bodies combust because of a high concentration of acetone and legs often have too little fat for acetone to accumulate. Ford writes:

> ....there is one flammable constituent of the body that can greatly increase in concentration. Triacylglycerol lipids cleave to form fatty acid chains and glycerol. The fatty acids can be used as an alternative source of energy through beta-oxidation, giving rise to the key metabolic molecule acetyl-CoA. This helps drive the energy-producing Krebs cycle within the mitochondria of cells.
>
> If the body's cells are starved (which can occur during chronic illness and even

during a workout at the gym), acetyl-CoA in the liver is converted into acetoacetate, which can decarboxylate into acetone. And acetone is highly flammable. A range of conditions can produce ketosis, in which acetone is formed, including alcoholism, high-fat low-carbohydrate dieting, diabetes and even teething.

Ford ignited scale models of humans made of pork tissue marinaded in acetone and fully clothed. The models "burned to ash within half an hour. The remains - a pile of smoking cinders with protruding limbs - were exactly like the photographs of human victims."

Some alleged cases of SHC are cases of spontaneous combustion but they are explicable by natural means. For example, a chemical reaction on or in a person's clothing can result in spontaneous combustion. The National Geographic special, mentioned above, investigated a case of a woman whose clothes suddenly caught fire and burned the skin on her thigh. The most likely explanation is that she put a shell in her pocket that was covered in sodium from a fireworks show that had taken place on the beach where she had retrieved the shell. Later, she stuck a wet handkerchief in her pocket with the shell. The sodium may have reacted with the water, releasing hydrogen that self-ignited,* causing her burns. In any case, she did not burn from the inside, as is claimed happens to SHC victims.

Richard Milton, the alternative scientist, lists several cases that he thinks are convincing proof of SHC. All but one of the cases he cites come from Larry Arnold, the one who posits an unknown particle that occasionally strikes a cell inside a person, causing a nuclear reaction. Here's a sampling.

1. **Jean Lucille Saffin**. This 61-year-old mentally handicapped woman burst into flames in her kitchen. "Her father, who was seated at a nearby table, said he saw a flash of light out of the corner of his eye and turned ... to find that she was enveloped in flames, mainly around her face and hands." The fire was put out with water by Mr. Saffin and his son-in-law. No cause of the fire was found. How does this qualify as a case of SHC? Because an unnamed policeman told Saffin's relatives that that's what he believed caused Jean's death. Milton is also impressed by the fact that the father and son-in-law claim the fire lasted only a minute or two (so there should be no surprise that the rest of the room didn't go up in flames!). Milton doesn't consider that the testimony of the father and son-in-law may be tainted.

2. **Helen Conway**. You've probably seen this picture before.

Conway was an elderly, infirm woman who was a heavy and careless smoker. (There were many cigarette burns in her room.) She burned up while sitting in an upholstered chair in her bedroom. Why is this considered SHC? The fire chief said that's what he believed. He also said it only took 21 minutes for her to burn. If it did, the wick effect would not account for how she burned. (Arnold uses some sort of "deduction" to figure out that it may have taken only six minutes for Conway's body to be consumed.) Since they can't figure out how Conway burned up in such a short time, both Arnold and Milton conclude it was probably SHC.



*Helen Conway's remains 1964, Delaware County, Pennsylvania*

Joe Nickell speculates that the fire "may have begun at the base of the seated body and burned straight upward, fed by the fat in the torso, and may have thus been a much more intense fire - not unlike grease fires that all who cook are familiar with. Indeed, in searching through the dense smoke for the victim, an assistant chief sank his hand "into something greasy" that proved to be the woman's remains."*

Milton's research in this area is limited almost exclusively to Larry Arnold's book *Ablaze!: The Mysterious Fires of Spontaneous Human Combustion*, a book which features a blurb from Maury Povich on its back cover. Paranormal investigator Joe Nickell refers to this work as *Spontaneous Human Nonsense.*

The stories that Milton posts on his web site reveal his willingness to be dazzled by speculations about SHC. It is true that the examples he has chosen can't be explained by the wick effect because they are all of cases where the person in flames is come upon within a relatively short time of being on fire. The wick effect requires hours of slow burning. However, the evidence that any of these cases is actually a case of spontaneous human combustion is flimsy at best.

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**reader comments**

**further reading**

**books and articles**


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New Light on Human Torch Story - human fat as a wick tested

"Spontaneous Human Combustion: No Longer a Burning Issue" by Al Seckel

"Not-So-Spontaneous Human Combustion" by Joe Nickell

Mary Reeser's incineration

FBI Debunks Spontaneous Human Combustion/ Despite Investigation, Believers Still Cite the Supernatural by Todd Venezia

Spontaneous Human Combustion - BBC.com Edited Guide Entry

Experiments in the combustibility of the human body by Angie M. Christensen



*burning man*

Does spontaneous human combustion exist? --

**news**

Spontaneous combustion killed Irish pensioner, inquest rules Coroner gives first spontaneous combustion verdict in 25-year career after man found dead in unexplained circumstances ... The West Galway coroner, Kieran McLoughlin, said there was no other adequate explanation for the death of 76-year-old Michael Faherty, also known as Micheal O Fatharta. He said it was the first time in his 25 years as a coroner that he had returned such a verdict....Garda Gerard O'Callaghan said he went to the house after the fire had been extinguished and found Faherty lying on his back in a sitting room, with his head closest to the fireplace. The rest of the house had sustained only smoke damage. O'Callaghan told the coroner that the only damage was to Faherty's remains, the floor underneath him, and the ceiling above....[Faherty's] body had been extensively burned and, because of the extensive damage to the organs, it was not possible to determine the cause of death....The state pathologist, Prof. Grace Callagy, noted in her post-mortem findings that Faherty had Type 2 diabetes and hypertension, but concluded he had not died from heart failure. (**Bob Carroll comments: A 76-year-old man burns to death in front of his fireplace. The body's so badly burned that the cause of death can't be determined, yet one expert ruled out heart failure. What if the expert was wrong? What if poor Faherty ignited himself while tending to his fire and the excitement of trying to extinguish his blazing clothes caused him to fall and pass out? What kind of story is that? Not much, compared to hypothesizing spontanous human combustion.**

**As another expert notes in this story from the BBC:**

> Retired professor of pathology Mike Green said he had examined one suspected case in his career.

He said he would not use the term spontaneous combustion, as there had to be some source of ignition, possibly a lit match or cigarette.

"There is a source of ignition somewhere, but because the body is so badly destroyed the source can't be found," he said.

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People can catch on fire... but can it really happen when there is no external source of ignition?

by Brian Dunning

Filed under Paranormal, Urban Legends

Skeptoid #258
May 17, 2011
Podcast transcript | Listen | Subscribe

Today we're going to point our skeptical eye at one of the mainstays of the paranormal: spontaneous human combustion (SHC). The idea is that people can, while simply minding their own business, burst into flames, with no external source of ignition. It's not a medically recognized phenomenon, and no explanation exists that can reasonably account for any but a few of the many stories. Thus, it's found a firm home in the world of the strange, that subdivision of Earthly phenomena that is studied and promoted by only a few fringe researchers and outsiders. That doesn't mean it's wrong though; and we're going to look at it as closely as we can.

Spontaneous human combustion is a little different from most paranormal phenomena, in that it's a claim of no external source for the fire. That people have burned up is the fact that's not in question; the question is the theory of what *caused* them to burn. In this case, believers are asserting that there was no conventional cause. Their job is, in effect, to prove a negative. Proving a negative is different from the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis for an unexplained fire is simply to say that no cause is known, which is different from stating authoritatively that there *is no* cause. Thus, the burden of proof still rests on the claimant, even in this case. Science does not allow us to make the jump from "the cause of the fire is unknown," therefore "the cause is known and it's spontaneous human combustion." Science allows unanswered questions; indeed, science exists because of unanswered questions. The lack of an answer proves only that we don't know something yet, it does not prove the existence of the paranormal.

Stories of SHC generally fall into one of two categories. The first type is the discovery of a body that burned while nobody was present, usually almost completely to ashes but for a few bits like the hands or feet. Even bones are burned away. The second type is a dinner party or some other event, where many witnesses all see one person suddenly go up into flames for no evident reason, and the flames are usually extinguished before the person can be killed. For each of these two types, there are a few very prominently repeated examples that you'll find on the Internet or in books. We'll give two examples of each.

Since this is my show, I'm going to invoke Host's Privilege and formally declare the two kinds. Spontaneous Human Combustion of the First Kind is when there are no witnesses to what happened:

- The most famous such case is that of 67-year-old Mary Reeser, whose remains were found by a friend in her St. Petersburg, FL home in 1951. Only her foot remained, still in its slipper, while the rest of her body had been reduced completely to ashes, along with the chair in which she'd been sitting. Her case is sometimes referred to as "the cinder woman".

- Another example you're likely to find in the books is that of 92-year-old John Bentley. A meter reader found Bentley's foreleg and his walker straddled atop a hole burned into his bathroom floor, and Bentley's ashes on the floor of the basement below.

Most sources cite something like 300 such cases of the First Kind, and they all follow this same basic pattern. A person, usually elderly, often overweight, frequently mobility challenged, is found burned almost completely to ashes, bones and all. Their surroundings show scorching but are usually not burned.

Now, in recent years, a pretty good theory has been publicized that adequately explains all (or most) reliably documented cases of the First Kind, and that's the wick effect, of which a candle is the most familiar example. The flame on a candle's wick is small, but its temperature is very hot; thus it has a powerful melting effect within its tiny sphere of influence. This melts the wax into liquid, which is drawn up the wick, where it vaporizes and burns. The wick itself does not burn due to the cooling effect of the vaporization; but once the wax is gone, the wick burns away as well.

The application of the wick effect to human corpses is not supposition, but proven fact. In 2001, the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* published an account of a test performed at the State of California's Bureau of Forensic Services in which a pig carcass was wrapped in a blanket and provided with a source of ignition. After a number of hours, the smoldering fire was extinguished and it was discovered that the part of the pig that had burned so far, bones and all, had been reduced to ash. The experiment was repeated on the BBC television program *QED.* The body burns very slowly, with only a tiny flame or even no visible flame at all; and like a candle, the heat is so localized that very little else in the vicinity is affected by it.

In 1991, a pair of hikers in Oregon came across the body of a murdered woman in which a wick effect fire was still taking place. The middle portion of her body had been completely burned away, including the pelvis and spine, while the slow-burning smoldering fire was still taking place in both legs and the upper torso. The killer was later captured and confessed to having lit the corpse on fire using lighter fluid. Like the other victims, the woman was overweight, with a high fat content that is believed to have provided ideal conditions for the wick effect to take place. Mary Reeser and John Bentley were both overweight, had been wearing flammable clothes (exceptionally flammable in Mary Reeser's case), and both were smoking at the time of death. The condition of both corpses and the rooms in which they were found was perfectly consistent with what we'd expect to find if the wick effect had occurred.

However, not everyone accepts the wick effect explanation. Author Larry Arnold is among its most vocal critics. His 1995 book *Ablaze! The Mysterious Fires of Spontaneous Human Combustion* asserts that the cases mentioned above, and many others, have no natural explanation. Arnold wrote two other books as well, *The Reiki Handbook* about energy

healing, and a report on what he believed were the psychic causes of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident. His explanation for SHC follows the same type of fringe reasoning. Arnold proposes that a particle that he called a "pyrotron" strikes the victim's body and ignites it from within. His pyrotron is unknown to science, of unknown origin, is undetectable, and has no describable properties, except that it seems to have something to do with kundalini yoga. Though the publication of his book has made Larry Arnold something of a go-to guy expert on SHC, his explanation is clearly unacceptable from any reasonable scientific perspective. Science does not allow simply making up a subatomic particle and calling that a mechanism for anything.

Other researchers have proposed various other explanations, including methane, which is one byproduct of bacterial action in the gut. And, as every college student with a cigarette lighter knows, it's flammable. One problem with the methane hypothesis is that cows produce even more gas than humans, and if it were true, we'd expect spontaneous cow combustion to be common. But we don't have any reports of this. One explanation for the discrepancy is that cows do not participate in the triggering activities. Cows don't wear a lot of flammable rayon acetate nightgowns, and their nighttime place of rest is a rarely an overstuffed chair beside a crackling fireplace. They spend much less time smoking than humans, as their hooves lack the manual dexterity needed to operate a cigarette lighter (explaining the lack of Saturday night barnyard hilarity).

Spontaneous Human Combustion of the Second Kind is when the event is witnessed and we have accounts of what took place. These accounts are quite different than those of the First Kind. Slow, smoldering fires are never the case; they are always a large sudden ignition with active flames. When the victims survive, the burns (which can be serious) are on the skin, never the deep, complete reduction to ashes seen in the First Kind.

- In London in 1982, Jeannie Saffin, a severely mentally handicapped elderly woman, was sitting at a table with family when her upper torso suddenly caught on fire. They extinguished the flames and paramedics took her to a burn unit, where she died eight days later of lung damage from inhaling the fire.

- In 1938, also in London, 22-year-old Phyllis Newcombe's dress suddenly caught on fire as she was going downstairs at a dance. Other revelers extinguished the flames but she, too, died at the hospital from her burns.

People catching on fire is not especially uncommon. It happens all the time. The only thing differentiating the cases classified as SHC is that no source of ignition was found; the fires are said to have been spontaneous. Other than that, there's nothing especially remarkable about them. The fires burned in a familiar manner, and the injuries are what would be expected. But these cases of the Second Kind are also rare; probably more rare than the First Kind. The reason is that these are unsolved, whereas the First Kind cases are generally solved, at least to the satisfaction of the investigators. These two cases of the Second Kind are famous only because there was no source of ignition found. No cigarettes, open flames, or sparks were found near either Jeannie Saffin or Phyllis Newcombe; but it's not scientifically permissible to conclude that their combustions were spontaneous. Maybe they were; but just

because we didn't find the cause hardly means that there wasn't one.

Structure fires or brush fires sometimes go unsolved as well, but I think you'll have a hard time finding a fire inspector who will invent the term "spontaneous structure combustion" as if the lack of a determined cause means there wasn't one. Spontaneous Human Combustion of the Second Kind should not be allowed to exist as a category; instead we should call them what they are: Unsolved deaths by fire. Similarly, SHC of the First Kind has never been found to be spontaneous either. Those are simply the rare cases where a natural death in isolation has been followed by a slow combustion from some nearby source of ignition.

The wick effect is an interesting tidbit of science, albeit somewhat gruesome. I find that the logical pitfall of calling either type of SHC "spontaneous", and instead recognizing why they're not, is even more interesting.




Brian Dunning

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**Discuss!**

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In the UK a while back 'cack' was commonly used term for excrement, as in 'He's talking a load of cack!'.

Also when someone was said to be very nervous about something they were said to be 'Cacking themse3lves' lol

Can't remember the backward Brits ever using 'cack' to mean a good laugh. They do use the Irish word 'craic' - pronounced 'crack' in a similar way; 'craic' being fun conversation or being in on a joke or social situation.

I think science has done a pretty good job of explaining this SHC nonsense., I never liked the term anyway, but I can remember reading about such unexplained mysteries when I was young and often wondered about it. Shame it wasted a whole tasty pig to prove some aspects of its nonsense.

Macky's thoughts on static causing humans to ignite, who knows? Maybe with the right conditions - wasn't there some thinking that the airship Hindenburg was brought down by static discharge from an earthed securing line?

I know that I have worked with folks in static sensitive conditions and one person I worked with always had high discharges outside the area when not grounded. In the canteen at break she used to be discharging on people, chairs all sorts, in the end I got her to hold a 10 meg resistor and discharge through that before touching stuff lol It used to happen at home a lot too, makes me wonder what her love-life was like lol



Gavin Thomas, Cardiff, Wales
September 1, 2012 9:57am

"I know that I have worked with folks in static sensitive conditions and one person I worked with always had high discharges outside the area when not grounded. In the canteen at break she used to be discharging on people, chairs all sorts, in the end I got her to hold a 10 meg resistor and discharge through that before touching stuff lol It used to happen at home a lot too, makes me wonder what her love-life was like lol"

Hehe her partner walked around with a fixed grin on his face, and his eyes probably glowed in the dark ....



Macky, Auckland
September 4, 2012 12:59pm

This is just ascribing a willing lack of investigation..

As to her partner being DC after static, who really cares.

Macky was right to be cynical..Just a little tasteless.

I'll admit that until 1985 I was a cmos killer.. Then I started using hair conditioner. and wearing nice shoes..

I'll leave it to Macky to explain how that worked..



Mud, Sin City, Oz
February 13, 2013 11:30pm

Hello, Im interested to know the causes of SHC ... I read in (Quran), some statements maybe connected to this title .. they lead to a fact that the human body is a fuel itself.
I am a dentist, and i have no idea about forensic science...
if anybody is working in this field and interested to discover the causes of SHC, this may help:

this is one of the statements translated..

2:23
(And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah , if you should be truthful.

2:24
(But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.

http://quran.com/2



Sura, Doha/Qatar
February 16, 2013 11:24am

No offence, Sura, but I don't think there's ever been any question that human bodies burn.



Darren, Liverpool, UK
February 23, 2013 4:24am

"People catching on fire is not especially uncommon. It happens all the time."

Yes, ALL the time! Can't believe you said that!
Recall the M Python sketch 'Mrs Niggerbaiter explodes"? Cleese, wearily-
"Mother, people explode all the time"

Anyway why has no cremation outfit looked into a really cheap way to dispose of fat people???

Jim Fox, London
April 16, 2013 1:04pm

I'm less interested in the trigger than in the continuation of the burning. The wick effect is an interesting hypothesis for SHC of the first kind, but where is the wick? A candle is 100% flammable, but you can't keep it burning without the wick. In fact, you can't light a candle with a propane torch, if the wick is absent or really short. I've tried. How do we keep a slow flame going in a wickless body for hours or days? The body discovered by the Oregon hikers adds another question- how do you prevent a small flame from blowing out "like a candle in the wind", when it is out of doors?

The spectacular flames of SHC of the second kind are also hard to explain. People light candles, matches, stoves, fires, farts, and run their hands through flames to show off. Fire breathers expel flammable liquid from their mouths, which burns just beyond their lips. People have their hair and eyebrows singed, and their clothes catch on fire with some frequency. Triggers abound, but they rarely, if ever, cause a major flare-up like the descriptions of SHC-2. What makes the SHC-2 cases so different? We can invent possible explanations- that they were doused in alcohol- but no evidence is reported supporting that supposition.

Derek, Santa Fe, NM
April 16, 2013 3:33pm

Gee DJ. "A case of spontaneous combustion". Med Sci Law 1965; 5: 37–38

was about the first paper on the wick effect Derek.

Wasn't hard to find even with the dismal internet Pho has us suffering with.

I am actually surprised somebody didnt bother to check.

Mud, Greenacres by the sea Oz
April 24, 2013 4:54am

I have seen several attempts at demonstrating the "wick effect." None has produced significant degradation of the sample used to represent the human body with the exception of those where the demonstrator resorted to an accelerant.

DragonHawk1959, Richmon
October 3, 2013 5:08am

Maybe in cases where there is sufficient fat to get the rest of the body burning completely, as with an overweight person, or with a large flame that an elderly or mobility-induced person would be unable to avoid...

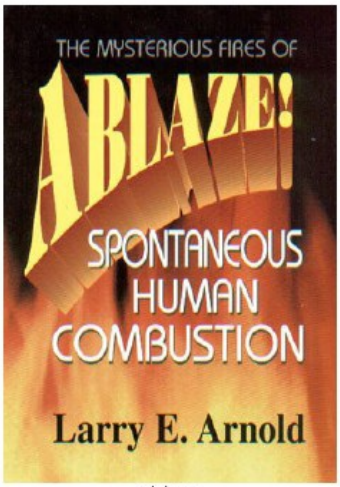
Hang on, aren't overweight, elderly or mobility-impaired people victins of SHC of the first kind?



Bill, Canberra
November 2, 2013 1:59am

Make a comment about this episode of Skeptoid (please try to keep it brief & to the point).

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*ablaze*

In my column in Skeptical Inquirer (November/December 1996), I dealt with the major cases of alleged spontaneous human combustion (SHC) reported in Larry E. Arnold's book Ablaze! The Mysterious Fires of Spontaneous Human Combustion (1995). Although that selection revealed some of the pseudoscientific attitudes behind SHC, it perhaps did not go far enough to reveal just how silly some of the cases attributed to the imagined phenomenon are.

One such case in Ablaze! is that of a "baffling" and "abnormal fiery accident" that occurred "about fifteen miles southeast of Baltimore, in Arundel [sic] County, Maryland" (actually Anne Arundel County). The date is rather vaguely given as "early April 1953," a curious way of expressing it, since the accident transpired on April 1 (Baltimore Sun, April 2, 1953). Arnold provides not a single source citation for the case other than to quote briefly the late Frank Edwards, one-time columnist for Fate magazine and author of several mystery-mongering books, like Stranger Than Science, notorious for their errors and exaggerations.

As Arnold relates the case:

> Here, Maryland and State Police found Bernard J. Hess in his overturned car at the bottom of a twenty-foot embankment. The Baltimore man had a fractured skull. Therefore, the cause of death appeared obvious, the case routine. Then the coroner investigated. Routine quickly ceased. Although he found no trace of fire damage to the wreckage, the coroner discovered first- and second-degree burns covered two-thirds of the dead man's fully clothed body. Police failed initially to notice Hess's searing because . . . well, because his garments hadn't burned!
>
> Authorities concluded that Hess's severely blistered skin would make it impossibly painfully [sic] for him to dress himself after being burned. Contemporary reports do not mention officials finding any electrical or fuel problems with the car that would have caused his injuries.

Arnold continues:

> Did Hess fall victim to foul play at the scene, as unknown assailants stripped Hess naked, doused him with unidentified chemical accelerants and lit them, then re-dressed and drove their victim to a location remote from the crime to push him over the embankment in his car? No evidence supported this. Did Hess succumb to SHC?

As Frank Edwards remarked three years after this incident: "The burns which played a part in his death constitute another mystery which remains unsolved."

Whereas Arnold insists that “contemporary reports” give no clue to the mystery, in fact newspaper accounts actually report the official medical examiner’s determination. First, however, the reader is invited to provide a plausible solution to the mystery. There are several potential hypotheses, each more credible than spontaneous human combustion, but you may ignore Arnold’s deliberately silly scenario of “unknown assailants” stripping, burning, and re-dressing the victim. Instead, simply consider the circumstances of an overturned car and the damaged skin coupled with unburned clothing. Please pause here to construct your hypothesis.

Finished? My own analysis began with the possibility that Mr. Hess had simply been scalded by hot water from a ruptured radiator — or from the heater core located in the dashboard. Apparently that was not the true solution, but it certainly represented a hypothetical solution. According to the Baltimore Sun of April 3, 1953, “Gasoline ‘burns’ on the body of Bernard Joseph Hess . . . had nothing to do with his death, an autopsy yesterday disclosed.” Dr. Russell S. Fisher, Baltimore’s chief medical examiner, stated that the 35-year-old Hess died of head injuries suffered when the convertible he was driving overturned on April 1. Dr. Fisher said that gasoline had soaked through the victim’s clothing to inflict what the Sun called “skin injuries similar to burns” caused by a reaction to the fuel. The Baltimore News-Post (April 2, 1953) cited an assistant medical examiner who provided a concurring opinion: “The examiner, Dr. Francis J. Januszeski, said gasoline is an ‘organic solvent,’ used in cleaning to remove grease, and has somewhat the same effect on flesh.”

Interestingly, Bernard “Whitey” Hess was a convicted forger who had been released on probation. He had used another man’s credentials to pose as a potential auto buyer and thus steal the convertible in which he died. His wife — then serving a sentence for embezzlement — was notified in jail of his death (Baltimore Sun, April 2 [evening ed.] and 3, 1953).

Obviously, the Hess case had nothing to do with spontaneous human combustion, as Larry Arnold should have realized. Arnold, who is not a physicist but a Pennsylvania school bus driver, had no justification for asking ominously, “Did Hess succumb to SHC?” The unburned clothing should have led any sensible investigator to one of the possibilities limited by that fact: for example, that Hess had been burned previously, or his skin injuries were caused by steam or hot water, chemical liquids or vapors, or some type of radiation (possibly even extreme sunburn through loosely woven clothing). In any event, Arnold could have done as I did and sought out the newspaper accounts of the day. It would have saved him from yet another folly.

**Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to my co-workers Vance Vigrass, Dana Walpole, and Etienne Ríos for their helpful suggestions and discussions.

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On the day after the sinking of the Titanic the Steamer Prinz Adalbert passed the iceberg shown in this photograph. The Titanic Disaster was not yet known by us. On one side red paint was plainly visible, which had the appearance of having been made by the scraping of a vessel on the iceberg.

S. S. Prinz Adalbert
Hamburg American Line

M. Lindenwald
Chief-Steward

Adolf Kelbschmidt Cook
Heinrich Schmidt Steward
Hoffmann Steward

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# Mathematical Models of Interactions between Species: Peaceful Co-existence of Vampires and Humans Based on the Models Derived from Fiction Literature and Films

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**Abstract**

**Our paper presents a new approach to mathematical modeling of intertemporal interactions between species based on differential equations. It employs the example of interactions between vampires and humans using several types of vampire behavior described in popular fiction literature, comic books, films and TV series. Although mathematical modeling enables us to reject most of the popular scenarios embedded in popular literature and films, it appears that several popular culture sources outline the models describing plausible and peaceful vampire and human co-existence.**

**Keywords:** intertemporal interactions, predator-prey models, differential equations, vampires, co-existence of species

## 1. Introduction: Dynamics of growth in human population

Assume that the world's population is to follow the exponential growth rate $x(t)$, and by the end of 2011 ($x_1$) reaches 7 billion people ($t_1$). This dynamics (which

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The maximal growth of the number of vampires (infected humans) will be observed in a moment of time $t_{max}$:

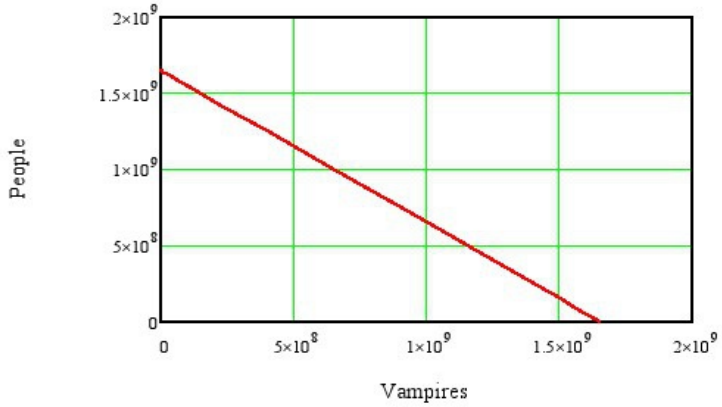
$$t_{\max} = \frac{\ln(x_0 / y_0)}{a(y_0 + x_0)} + t_0 \tag{19}$$

where $t_{max}$= 153 is the day (153$^{rd}$ day) when the number of vampires is the highest, $x(t_{max})$=825 million is the number of vampires in a moment of time $t_{max}$, $x'(t_{max})$=286 million is the number of newly turned vampires in day $t_{max}$.

Figure 6 shows the phase diagram of both populations. It is apparent that the increase in one population (vampires) inevitably leads to the decrease in another (humans). When the number of vampires reaches the number of human population, the humans disappear altogether. The presence of vampires in the Stoker–King model brings the mankind to the brink of extinction.

The Stoker-King model describes the "explosive" growth of vampire population. Within the two months of Dracula's arrival to England (or Kurt Barlow's arrival to New England), there would have been 4 thousand vampires in operation. The model analyzed in this scenario is very similar to an epidemic outbreak caused by a deadly virus (e.g. Ebola or SARS). According to the Stoker-King model, vampires need just half a year to take up man's place in nature. Therefore, the co-existence of humans and vampires seems highly unrealistic.

**Figure 6:** Phase diagram of vampire ($z^2$) and human ($z^1$) populations in the Stoker-King model.

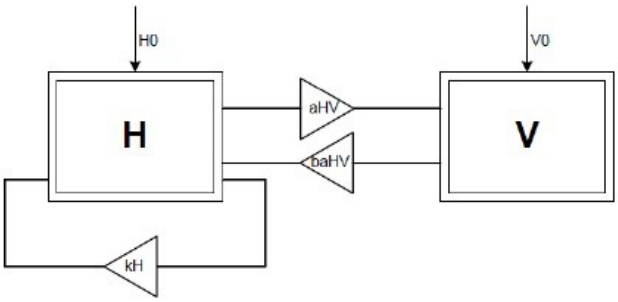



### *3.2. Scenario 2: The Rice model*

Anne Rice "Vampire Chronicles" describes the world with vampires, where vampires still need to feed on human beings (like in the Stoker-King model) but do so discretely (Rice, 1997). The vampire can attack a human being, feed on it and leave it to live. In some cases (if they are too hungry), vampires kill their victims by draining their blood. The vampire cannot easily turn the human into another vampire (in order to do so, the victim's permission needs to be gained, it needs to drink some of vampire's blood and the whole process is painful for both of them and takes several days, so it happens very rarely). Vampires do not need

to feed every day: some blood once a week or so is enough to survive. The initial conditions of the Rice model are the following: 2 vampires, 982 million people, there are no organized groups of vampire slayers (Diagram 2).

**Diagram 2:** The Rice model




where H denotes humans and V denotes vampires, H0 is the initial state of human population, kH denotes the exponential growth of human population, v0 is the initial state of vampire population, and aHV and baHV both describe interactions between a human and a vampire (with a as the coefficient of a lethal outcome for vampire-human interaction for humans and b as the coefficient describing the rate with which humans are turned into vampires).

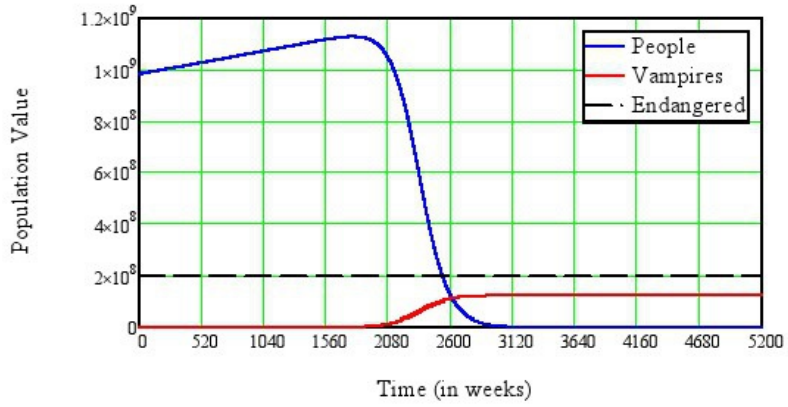
Assume the events described in "Vampire Chronicles" were real. How would things evolve given the Rice model dynamics described in her literary works? Let us take 1791 as a starting point (a year Lestat made Lui a vampire). In 1791, the world population was about 982 million people (UN, 1999).

Let us calibrate the parameters of this specific predator-prey model. The calculation period is set to 100 years with a step of 7 days *(t=0... 5200)*. The coefficient of human population growth is calculated as $k = \frac{\ln(x_1 / x_0)}{t_1 - t_0}$ where где $x_1=1520$ million people at a moment of time $t_1=1891$, $x_0=982$ million people at $t_0=1791$. Humans do not necessarily die or become vampires after their encounter with vampires, thence the coefficient of lethal outcome $a$ will be considerably lower than in the Stoker-King model and is therefore denoted as $0.1 \cdot a$. The probability of a human turned into a vampire is quite low and can be denoted as $b=0.1$. There are no efficient groups of vampire slayers, therefore we can put $c=0$. The resulting simplified model is presented in a form of the following Cauchy problem:

$$\begin{cases} \frac{dx}{dt} = x(k - ay) \\ \frac{dy}{dt} = baxy \\ x(0) = 982 \cdot 10^6 \\ y(0) = 2 \end{cases} \quad (20)$$

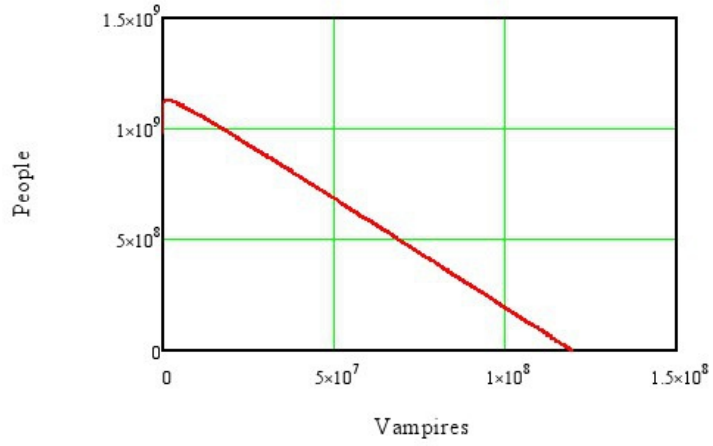
The following system is solved using the Range-Kutta method. The results are presented in a graphical form on Figure 7 that follows.

**Figure** 7: The change in the numbers of humans and vampires in time (1 step = 7 days) in the Rice model.




It is apparent that in spite of the presence of vampires, the human population in the Rice model grows in the beginning. However, when the number of vampires reaches its critical mass, the human population starts to shrink and after 48.7 years is almost extinct. The number of vampires at this moment is equal to 100 million. Figure 8 depicts the phase diagram of the system. It shows a clear pattern: when the vampire population is small, the human population is growing at its natural rate of reproduction. However, when the number of vampires starts to rise, the human population is diminishing proportionally to the increase in vampire population.

**Figure 8:** Phase diagram of vampire ($z^2$) and human ($z^1$) populations in the Rice model.



When compared to the Stoker-King model, the Rice model merely delays the total extinction of mankind. It is not possible to find equilibrium or stationary solution for this system. According to the Rice model, the co-existence of humans and vampires is possible for a short period of time. However, as time passes, all humans will be extinct or turned into vampires. Therefore, the co-existence of humans and vampires described by Anne Rice also seems unrealistic.

### *3.3. Scenario 3: The Harris-Meyer-Kostova model*

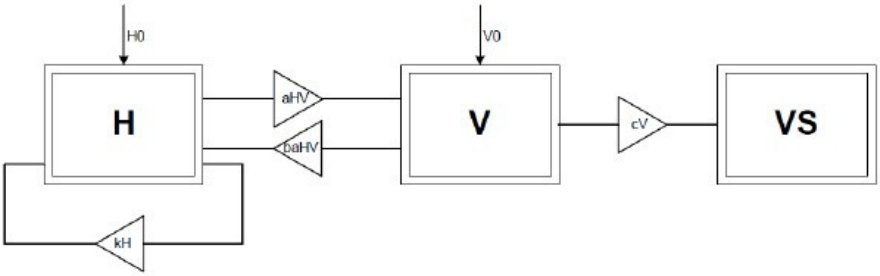
In the books of Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight series", Charlaine Harris's "Sookie Stockhouse (Southern Vampire) series", "True Blood" (TV series) and Elizabeth Kostova's "The Historian" there is a world drawn where vampires peacefully co-exist with humans.

For instance, in Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight series" vampires can tolerate the sunlight, interact with humans (even fall in love with them) and drink animals' blood to survive (Meyer, 2005). Of course, they have to live in secrecy and pretend to be human beings. In "True Blood" TV series, however, a world is shown where vampires and humans live side-by-side and are aware of each other. Vampires can buy synthetic blood of different blood types that is sold in bottles and can be bought in every grocery store, bar or gas station (Harris, 2001). They cannot walk during daytime, so they usually come out at night. Humans also find use of vampires' essence – vampires' blood (called "V") is a powerful hallucinogenic drug that is sought by humans and traded on the black market (sometimes humans capture vampires with the help of silver chains or harnesses and then kill them by draining their blood). Some humans seek sex with vampires (vampires are stronger and faster than humans and can provide superb erotic experience). There is a possibility to turn a human being into a vampire, but it takes time and effort.

In Elizabeth Kostova's novel "The Historian", vampires are rare although real and do not reveal themselves to humans too often. Their food ratios are limited and they spend lots of time brooding in their well-hidden tombs (Kostova, 2005).

"Sookie Stackhouse (Southern Vampire) Series" by Charlaine Harris comes with an interesting concept of vampires "coming out" in the 2000s: vampires have ultimately decided to reveal themselves to humans (a concept totally unacceptable in the works of Stephanie Meyer) and co-exist with them peacefully exerting their citizens' rights (see e.g. Harris, 2001). Assume that at the time of the events described in the first book of the series, "Dead Until Dark" (2001), the world's vampire hypothetical population was around five million (the population of the state of Louisiana in 2001 we arbitrarily use in our model). The initial conditions of the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model are the following: five million vampires, 6 159 million people, there are organized groups of vampire "drainers". The model can be presented in a form of a diagram (Diagram 3).

**Diagram 3:** The Harris-Meyer-Kostova model




where H denotes humans, V denotes vampires and VS denotes vampire slayers. H0 is the initial state of human population, kH denotes the exponential growth of human population, v0 is the initial state of vampire population, aHV and baHV both describe interactions between a human and a vampire (with a as the coefficient of a lethal outcome for vampire-human interaction for humans and b as the coefficient describing the rate with which humans are turned into vampires) and cV denotes the death rate for vampires.

Let us calibrate the parameters of this specific case of predator-prey model. The calculation period is set at 100 years with a step of 1 year *(t=2001… 2101)*. The coefficient of human population growth is calculated as $k = \frac{\ln(x_1 / x_0)}{t_1 - t_0}$ where $x_1 = 7000$ million people at a moment of time $t_1$=*2012*, $x_0$=*6150* million of people at time $t_0$=*2001*. Humans almost always come out alive from their encounters with vampires, hence the coefficient of lethal outcome $a$ will be low and is denoted by $0.01 \cdot a$. The probability of a human being turned into a vampire is similar to the on in the Rice model and equals to $b$=*0.1*. There are numerous groups of vampire "drainers" (although the number of drained vampires is relatively low and would not lead to their total extinction), therefore we can put $c>0$ ($c$ is calculated similarly to the coefficient $k$). The resulting model is presented in the initial set-up of predator-prey framework:

$$\begin{cases} \frac{dx}{dt} = x(k - ay) \\ \frac{dy}{dt} = y(bax - c) \\ x(0) = 6150 \cdot 10^6 \\ y(0) = 5 \cdot 10^6 \end{cases} \quad (21)$$

The model allows for a stationary solution: there are system parameters $(x_s, y_s)$ that would stabilize the populations of humans and vampires in time. In order to find the stabilized populations of both spices, $x_s$ and $y_s$, an equality described in (10) might be employed: $(x_s, y_s)$ = *(7704 8)* million individuals. Figure 9 that follows shows the stationary solution presented on a logarithmic scale.

**Figure 9:** Figure with stationary solution presented on a logarithmic scale for the vampire ($y_s$) and human ($x_s$) populations in the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model.

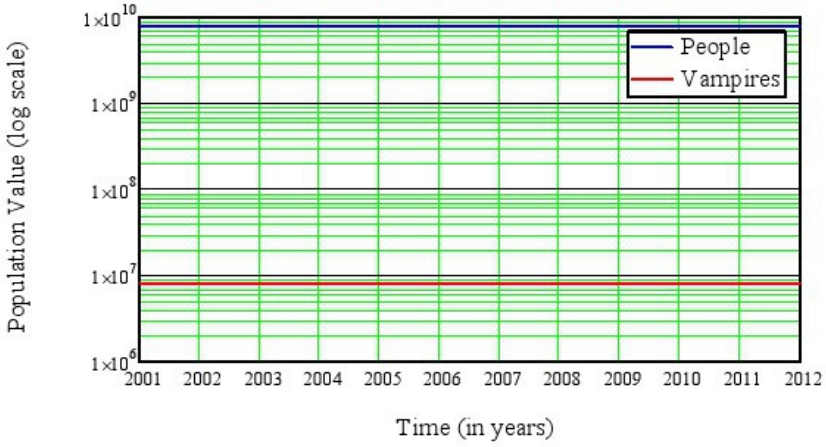
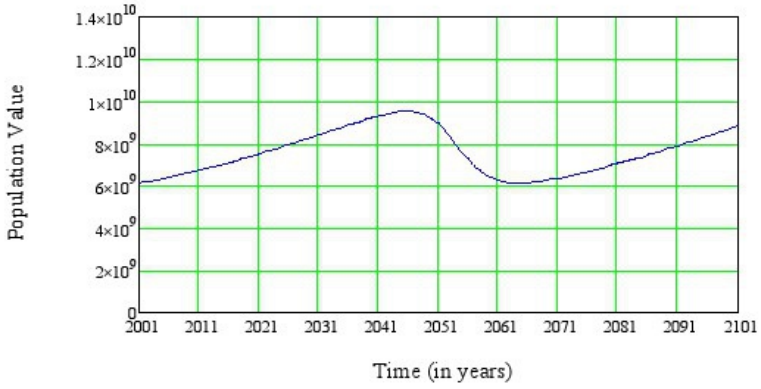
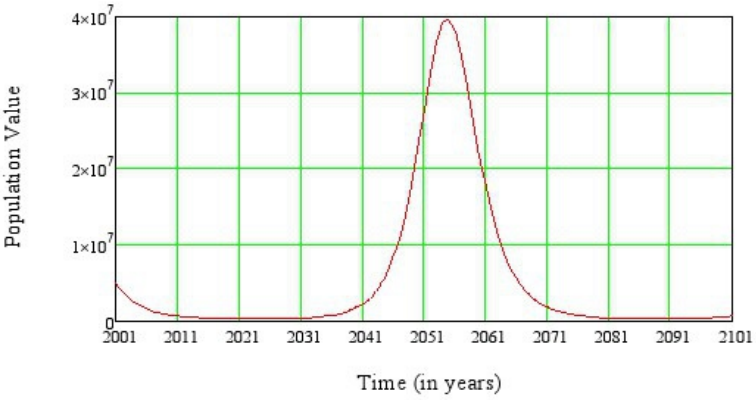



**Figure 10:** The change in the number of humans in the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model (cyclical nature)



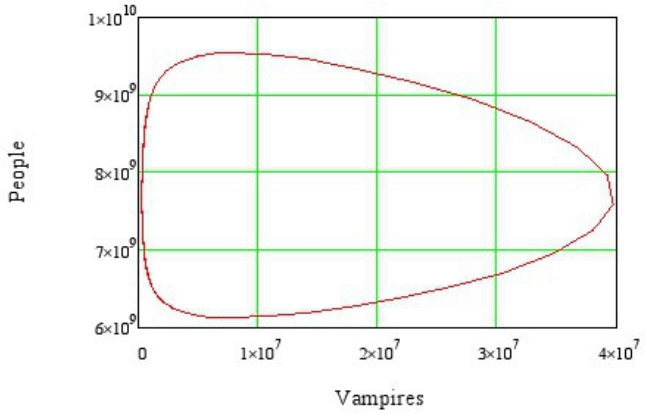

This stationary solution for 2001 cannot be found with the chosen population growth coefficient $k$ and can be reached applying some conditions only after 2012. The deviations in the number of people and vampires from the stationary state at the initial period of time are quite small which points at the fact that the system might be stable and auto-cyclical. This is proved by the further calculations (Figures 10-11).

**Figure 11:** The change in the number of vampires in the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model (cyclical nature)




It is apparent from Figures 10 and 11 that the human population will be growing until 2046 when it reaches its peak of 9.6 billion people, whereupon it will be declining until 2065 until it reaches its bottom at 6.12 billion people. This process will repeat itself continuously. The vampire population will be declining until 2023 when it reaches its minimum of 289 thousand vampires, whereupon it will be growing until 2055 until it reaches its peak at 397 million vampires. This process will repeat itself continuously. Figure 12 shows the phase diagram of the cyclical system of human-vampire co-existence.

**Figure 12:** Phase diagram of vampire ($z^2$) and human ($z^1$) populations in the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model




Under certain conditions, the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model seems plausible and allows for the existence of vampires in our world. Peaceful co-existence of two spices is a reality. However, this symbiosis is very fragile and whenever the growth rate of human population slows down, the blood thirst of vampires accelerates, or vampire drainers become too greedy, the whole system lies in ruins with just one population remaining.

## 4. Conclusions

It appears that although vampire-human interactions would in most cases lead to great imbalances in the ecosystems, there are several cases that might actually convey plausible models of co-existence between humans and vampires.
In total, three different models were defined, calibrated and analyzed. The Stoker-King model (based on Bram Stoker's "Dracula" and Stephen King's "'Salem's Lot") described the "explosive" rate of growth in vampire population that would lead to exterminating 80% of the human population on the 165$^{th}$ day of the first vampire's arrival. The scenario is similar to severe epidemic outbreaks and would lead first to the complete extinction of humans and then to the death of all vampires. The Rice model (based on Anne Rice's "Vampire Chronicles") would merely delay the total extinction of mankind by vampires by 48 years with respect to the first model and therefore cannot be considered as realistic.
Unlike the previous two, the Harris-Meyer-Kostova model (based on Charlaine Harris's "Southern Vampire Series", Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight saga" and Elizabeth Kostova's "The Historian") allows for the peaceful (and totally unnoticeable) existence of vampires in our world. However, the system is very fragile and some coordination is required to keep things in balance.
Overall, although mathematical principles enabled us to doubt the realism of many human and vampire encounters described in the literature, several sources provide what might be an acceptable description of the situation in which vampires and humans co-exist in a world that is very similar to the one we live in.

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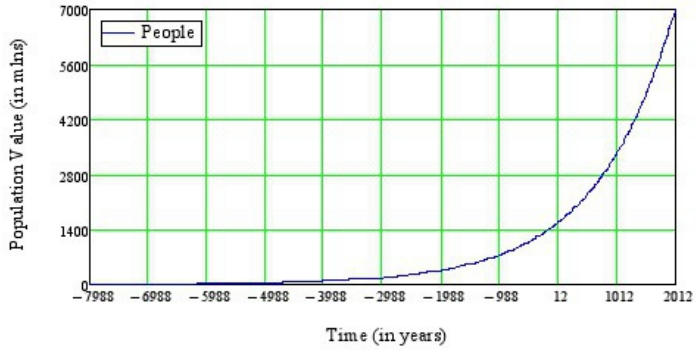
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**Received: October, 2012**

became a reality at the end of October 2011, when humanity reached the 7th billion) can be expressed by: $dx/tx=kx$ (1)
where $k$ represents the coefficient of the population growth.
Using the method of division of variables we would arrive to the following solution: $x(t) = x_0 e^{k(t-to)}$ (2)
where $x_0$ is the total volume of population at the initial time period $t_0$.
It seems logical to assume that the exponential phase in the growth of our planet's population started at the moment the first civilizations formed themselves (i.e. the level of socialization allowed for the reproduction of the human species regardless the caprices of nature). It was scientifically proven that the first civilizations on Earth were those dating back to around 8000 B.C. (e.g. Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Helenian, Minoan, Indian and Chinese civilizations) (Edwards et al., 1971).

According to Maddison (2006), 10 thousand years ago the population of Earth was about four million people. The initial conditions are formalized as follows: $t_0 = -8000$, $x_0 = 4$ million people. The coefficient of the world's population growth is: $k = ln\ (x_1/x_0)/\ t_1 - t_0 = ln\ (1 + T_{ry}) = 7.46 \cdot 10^{-4}$ (3)
where $T_{ry}$ is the annual growth rate of population (Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Exponential growth model of world's population from the 8000 B.C.




A simple calculation of the annual growth rate of Earth's population in accordance with this dynamics yields the number 0.075%. This is 15 times less than the average population growth in 2010 (Kapitsa, 2010).

**Figure 2:** Logarithmic scale of Earth's population growth

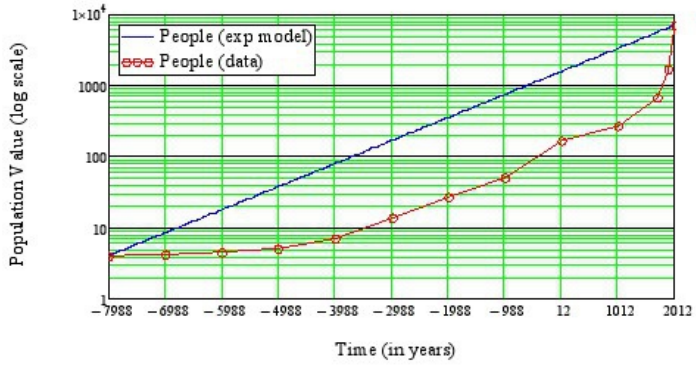



Figure 2 above depicts the logarithmic scale of the exponential dynamics and the actual dynamics built using the values of population growth starting from 8000 B.C (McEvedy and Jones, 1978). It is obvious that there is some hidden factor preventing human population from the explosive growth.

## 2. Vampires in the model of human population growth: predator-prey model

Consider introducing vampires into the model of population growth presented in (1). Vampires, the man's natural predators, are often described in legends and folklore. The vampirical theme has found its way into research literature becoming the key topic for popular science articles and even several academic papers (see e.g. Hartl and Mehlmann, 1982; Hartl and Mehlmann, 1983, Hartl et al., 1992; or Efthimiou and Gandhi, 2007).

The word "vampire" is considered to come from the Hungarian language where it is spelled "vampir". In Slavic languages, the word "vampire" exists in a quite similar form in Russian, Polish, Czech, Serbian and Bulgarian languages and is thought to come from the old Greek root "pi" (which means "to drink"). The first myths and legends about vampires have probably existed since the dawn of human history. In the 19$^{th}$ century, ancient Mesopotamian texts dating back to 4000 B.C. were translated into English revealing some mentioning of "seven spirits" that are very much like the description of vampires as we think of them today (Campbell Thompson, 1904).

The fact that vampires constituted a threat to humans throughout the history of mankind (whether this threat was real or imaginary one) can be illustrated by the examples of recent archaeological findings at ancient burial sites where some human remains showed signs of being staked, strapped or gagged with a stone, a typical way to slay the vampire, as the legends have it (New Scientist, 2009).

Suppose the vampire population is denoted by the function $y(t)$, $y_0=1$. Vampires act as natural predators for humans. The human population dynamics can therefore be presented as the following function: $dx/dt = kx - v(x)y$ (4)
where the equation $v(x)$ is the rate at which humans are killed by vampires.
Assume that the number of any vampire's victims is growing proportionally. Thence, the function $v(x)$ can be presented as the following: $v(x) = a \cdot x$ (5)
where $a>0$ is the coefficient of the human's lethal interaction with a vampire (a human is either killed by a vampire or is turned into a vampire).
As a result, the differential equation describing the growth rate of human population can be formulated as the following: $dx/dt = x(k-ay)$ (6)
Assume the dynamics of vampire's population change to be $y(t)$. The growth of vampire population will be determined by the quality and quantity of interactions with humans. After selecting its victim, any vampire can kill it by simply draining its blood, turning it into a new vampire or feeding on it but leaving it to live. Let us also introduce vampire slayers into the model. The slayers regulate the population of vampires by periodically killing vampires. The equation will then be modified to look like as the following: $dy/dt = baxy-cy$ (7)
where $0<b\leq 1$ is the coefficient reflecting the rate with which humans are turned into vampires, $c\geq 0$ is the coefficient of lethal outcome of the interaction between a vampire and vampire slayer.
Consider a Lotka-Volterra system (8). This system is classified as a "predator-prey" type model (Volterra, 1931):

$$\begin{cases} \dfrac{dx}{dt} = x(k - ay) \\ \dfrac{dy}{dt} = y(bax - c) \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

The system allows for the stationary solution, meaning that there is a pair of solutions for the system that creates a state when human and vampire populations can co-exist in time without any change in numbers. In order to find the solutions for these two populations, $x_s$ and $y_s$, we have to solve the following system putting it equal to zero:

$$\begin{cases} x(k - ay_s) = 0 \\ y(bax_s - c) = 0 \end{cases} \quad (9)$$

As a result, in the stationary case the initial system breaks down into two independent equations yielding the following parameters:

$$(x_s, y_s) = \left( \frac{c}{ba} \quad \frac{k}{a} \right) \quad (10)$$

It is obvious from a stationary case that the size of human population is determined by the effectiveness of slaying vampires by vampire hunters $c$ and the number of cases when the humans are turned into vampires $ba$. The size of vampire population depends on the growth rate of human population $k$ and vampires' thirst for human blood $a$. The stationary solution shows that when vampires are capable of restraining their blood thirst, the size of both populations

can be rather high in mutual co-existence. The system is held in balance by the existence of vampire slayers.

The model described in (8) represents a system of ordinary differential equations which can be solved by using iterative numerical methods. The most widely-used ones are a family of the Range-Kutta methods (Butcher, 2008) that represent the modified and corrected Euler's method with a higher degree of precision. The time-step algorithm includes the integration of differential equation from the initial to the final condition and computing the value of equation at the next step through the previous one.

$$y_{i+1} = y_i + \int_{t_i}^{t_{i+1}} g(t, y)dt \tag{11}$$

The basic idea of the Runge-Kutta algorithms lies in substituting the function $g(t,y)$ that depends on the unknown function $y(t)$ by certain approximation. The more precise the approximation of the integral, the more accurately one can determine $y_{i+1}$. Integrals can be approximated using either the rectangle method (2nd degree of precision) or Simpson's rule of numerical approximation of definite integrals (3rd degree of precision). The price one has to pay for the higher degree of precision would be the necessity to get the approximation of the integral in three points.

Running numerous experimental calculations it was established that the best ratio of precision and the volume of calculations is yielded by the fourth-order Runge-Kutta method. The formulae of calculations using the fourth-order Runge-Kutta method are presented below:

$$x_{i+1} = x_i + \frac{1}{6}\left[k_1 + 2k_2 + 2k_3 + k_4\right] \tag{12}$$

$$y_{i+1} = y_i + \frac{1}{6}\left[m_1 + 2m_2 + 2m_3 + m_4\right]$$

$$k_1 = f(t_i, x_i, y_i)\Delta t$$

$$m_1 = g(t_i, x_i, y_i)\Delta t$$

$$k_2 = f(t_i + \frac{\Delta t}{2}, x_i + \frac{k_1}{2}, y_i + \frac{m_1}{2})\Delta t$$

$$m_2 = g(t_i + \frac{\Delta t}{2}, x_i + \frac{k_1}{2}, y_i + \frac{m_1}{2})\Delta t$$

$$k_3 = f(t_i + \frac{\Delta t}{2}, x_i + \frac{k_2}{2}, y_i + \frac{m_2}{2})\Delta t$$

$$m_3 = g(t_i + \frac{\Delta t}{2}, x_i + \frac{k_2}{2}, y_i + \frac{m_2}{2})\Delta t$$

$$k_4 = f(t_i + \Delta t, x_i + k_3, y_i + m_3)\Delta t$$

$$m_4 = g(t_i + \Delta t, x_i + k_3, y_i + m_3)\Delta t$$

$$f(t_i, x_i, y_i) = x_i(k - ay_i)$$

$$g(t_i, x_i, y_i) = y_i(bax_i - c)$$

We employ the fourth-order Runge-Kutta method using the function *rkfixed (V,a, b,n D)* in order to solve the system described above [18]. The function has five arguments: *V*- the vector of initial values of the functions (border conditions), *[a,b]* - coordinates of the beginning and the end of the computation interval, *n* - the number of the network segments, *D* - the vector of the first derivatives of the system. The function *rkfixed()* yields a matrix consisting of *(n+1)* rows and three columns.

## 3. Evaluating the possibility of vampires' and humans' co-existence in the real world based on popular literature, comic books and films

Starting from Bram Stoker's "Dracula", the theme of vampirism has been widely exploited by many authors: Anne Rice, Stephen King, Stephenie Meyer, Elizabeth Kostova or Charlaine Harris, just to name a few. In addition, vampires often appear in comic books and films and TV series based on these books (e.g. "Blade" or "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"). We reviewed popular literature, comic books, and films on vampires and identified five types of scenarios describing vampires and humans interactions. These scenarios were used to draw models of vampire-human confrontation using the predator-prey model described and defined above.

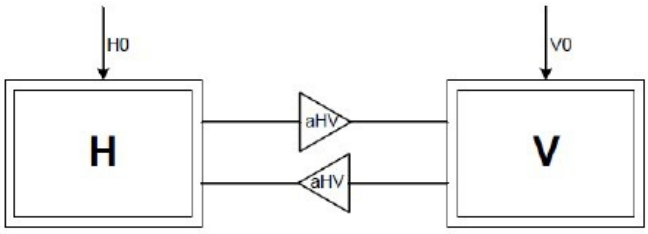
### *3.1. Scenario 1: The Stoker-King model*

Bram Stoker's "Dracula" and Stephen King's "'Salem's Lot" describe interactions between vampires and humans in the following way: a vampire selects a human victim and gets into its proximity (it typically happens after dark and the vampire needs the victim to invite her/him in). Often the vampire does not require permission to enter the victim's premises and attacks the sleeping victim (Stoker, 1897; McNally and Florescu, 1994). The vampire bites the victim and drinks the victim's blood, then returns to feed for 4-5 consecutive days, whereupon the victim dies, is buried and rises to become another vampire (unless a wooden stake is put through its heart). Vampires usually need to feed every day, so more and more human beings are constantly turned into vampires (Stoker, 1897; King, 1975).

Assume the events described in "Dracula" were real. How would things evolve given the Stoker-King model dynamics described in both sources? Let us take 1897 as the starting point (i.e. the year Stoker's novel was first published). In 1897, the world population was about 1 650 million people (UN, 1999).

The initial conditions of the Stoker-King model are the following: 1 vampire, 1 650 million people, there are no organized groups of vampire slayers. The date we choose for the first vampire has little bearing on our argument and therefore can be set arbitrarily. The model can be presented in a form of a diagram (Diagram 1).

**Diagram 1:** The Stoker-King model




where H0 denotes humans and V denotes vampires, H0 is the initial state of human population, v0 is the initial state of vampire population and the aHV describes an interaction between a human and a vampire (with a as the coefficient of a lethal outcome for vampire-human interaction for humans).

Let us calibrate the parameters of this specific (vampiric) case of predator-prey model. The calculation period is set at 1 year with a step of 5 days ($t = 0...73$). The coefficient of human population growth $k$ for the given period is very small and can be neglected, therefore $k=0$. The coefficient of lethal outcome for humans interacting with vampires can be calculated according to the scenario presented in the Stoker-King model $y_0(t) = y_0 q^t$, where $y_0=1$, $q=2$. The probability of a human being turned into a vampire is very high, thence $b=1$. Jonathan Harker and Abraham van Helsing could not be, by all means, considered very efficient vampire slayers, therefore we can put $c=0$.

The resulting model is presented in a form of the following Cauchy problem:

$$\begin{cases} \dfrac{dx}{dt} = -axy \\ \dfrac{dy}{dt} = axy \\ x(0) = 1.65 \cdot 10^9 \\ y(0) = 1 \end{cases} \tag{13}$$

Due to the fact that the total sum of humans and vampires does not change in time (human population does not grow and humans gradually become vampires), the predator-prey model is diminished to a simple problem of an epidemic outbreak (Munz et al., 2009).

It can be assumed that for any moment $t$ there holds an equality $x(t)+y(t)=x_0+y_0$, where $x_0=1.65 \cdot 10^9$. The system of differential equations can be presented in a form of a single differential equation: $dy/dt = ax(t)y(t) = ay(t)[y_0+x_0-y(t)]$ (14) with the initial condition $y(0)= y_0=1$.

This differential equation belongs to the class of logistic equations (e.g. the Verhulst equation that describes the growth of population). Let us solve the Cauchy problem for this equation:

$$\frac{dy}{y[x_0 + y_0 - y]} = adt \Rightarrow \frac{dy}{y} + \frac{dy}{y_0 + x_0 - y} = (y_0 + x_0)adt \Rightarrow \tag{15}$$

$$\ln(y) - \ln(y_0 + x_0 - y) = \ln y_0 - \ln(y_0 + x_0 - y_0) + a(y_0 + x_0)(t - t_0) \Rightarrow$$

$$\ln\left[\frac{y}{y_0+x_0-y}\right]=\ln\left[\frac{y_0}{x_0}\right]+a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)\Rightarrow\frac{y}{y_0+x_0-y}=\frac{y_0}{x_0}e^{a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)}$$

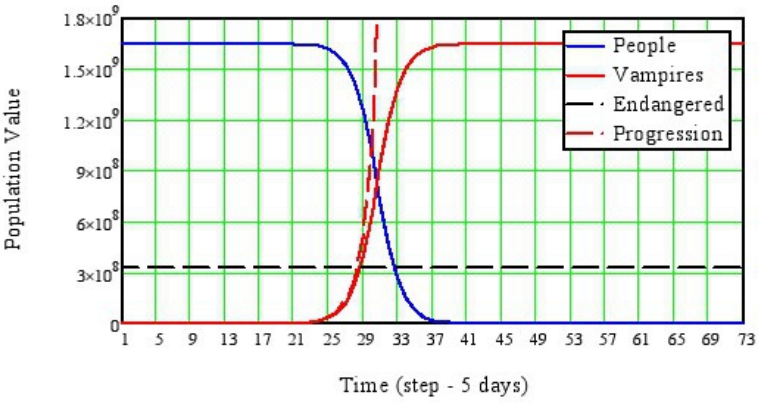
By solving the problem above we get the following equation:

$$y(t)=\frac{(x_0+y_0)y_0}{y_0+x_0e^{-\alpha(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)}},\ t\geq 0 \tag{16}$$

The equation clearly shows that with passing time the number of vampires grows and very soon there are no humans left: $\lim_{t\to\infty} y(t)=x_0+y_0$

The solution to this problem is presented below (Figure 3). It is clearly visible that the human population is drastically reduced by 80% by the 165$^{th}$ day from the moment when the first vampire arrives. This means that the human population reaches its critical value and practically becomes extinct (following the definitions of "Critically Endangered species" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (see IUCN, 2012)). At that precise moment, the world will be inhabited by 1 384 million vampires and 266 million people.

**Figure 3:** The change in the numbers of humans and vampires in time (1 step = 5 days) in the Stoker-King model




Let us observe the speed with which vampire population grows. In order to do that, an analysis of the following magnitude should be carried out: *dy/dt*.

$$\frac{dy}{dt}=\frac{a(y_0+x_0)^2y_0x_0e^{-a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)}}{(y_0+x_0e^{-a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)})^2} \tag{17}$$

The results are shown on Figure 4 that follows.

**Figure 4:** The change in vampires' growth dynamics (1 step = 5 days) in Stoker-King model

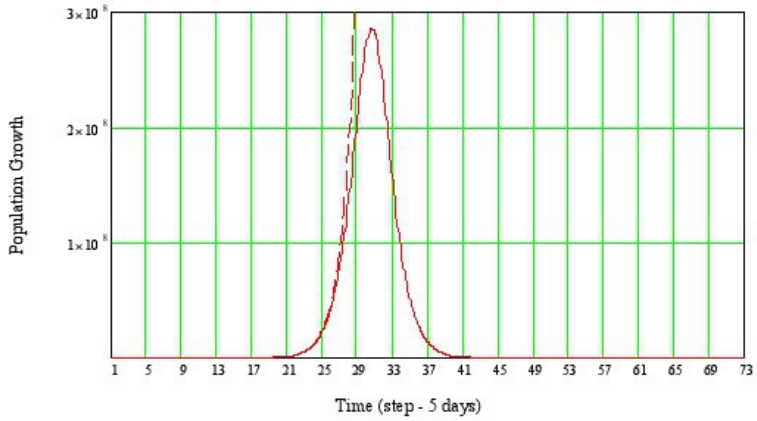
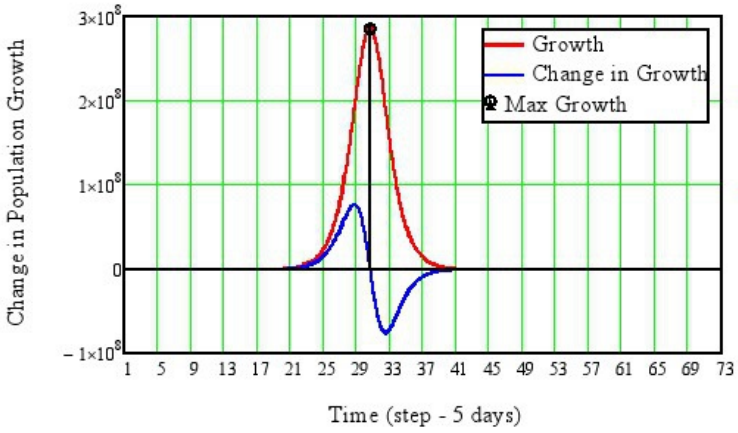



Figure 4 clearly shows that the growth of vampire population is extreme: at first, the number of vampires jumps up abruptly, but then slows down and declines.
In order to determine the moment of time when the speed of vampire population's growth reaches its maximal values, we need to take a look at the following magnitude: $d^2y/dt^2$

$$\frac{d^2y}{dt^2} = \frac{-a^2(y_0+x_0)^3 y_0 x_0 e^{-a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)}\left[y_0 - x_0 e^{-a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)}\right]}{\left[y_0 + x_0 e^{-a(y_0+x_0)(t-t_0)}\right]^3} \qquad (18)$$

Figure 5 illustrates how that the speed of vampire population's growth accelerates until the point denoted by $t_{max}$ and then slows down.

**Figure 5:** The change of speed of growth for vampire's population (1 step = 5 days) in the Stoker-King model



A Colombian man's lung tumors turned out to have an extremely unusual cause: The rapidly growing masses weren't actually made of human cells, but were from a tapeworm living inside him, according to a report of the case.

This is the first known report of a person becoming sick from cancer cells that developed in a parasite, the researchers said.

"We were amazed when we found this new type of disease—tapeworms growing inside a person, essentially getting cancer, that spreads to the person, causing tumors," said study researcher Dr. Atis Muehlenbachs, a staff pathologist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Infectious Diseases Pathology Branch (IDPB).

The man had HIV, which weakens the immune system and likely played a role in allowing the development of the parasite cancer, the researchers said. Although the man's case is probably a rare one, the researchers noted that both tapeworms and HIV affect millions of people worldwide, "so there may be more cases that are unrecognized," Muehlenbachs said. [10 Deadly Diseases That Hopped Across Species]

The 41-year-old man first went to doctors in Colombia after experiencing a fever, cough and weight loss for several months. The man had been diagnosed with HIV more than 10 years earlier, but was not taking his medications.

A CT scan showed tumors in his lung and lymph nodes, but biopsies of these tumors revealed bizarre cells, leading Colombian doctors to contact the CDC for assistance in diagnosing the man.

The cells, when examined under a microscope, acted like cancer cells—they multiplied quickly and crowded together. But the cells didn't appear to be human, they were 10 times smaller than human cancer cells.

After a number of tests, the researchers found DNA from a type of tapeworm called *H. nana* in the man's tumor. This result was surprising, the researchers said, because the cells did not look at all like tissue from a tapeworm. But further tests confirmed that the cells were indeed from*H. nana.*

The researchers hypothesized that, because the man had HIV, the tapeworm kept growing in the body, unchecked by the immune system. Eventually, mutations developed in the tapeworm's cells that turned the cells cancerous.

The patient died just 72 hours after researchers determined that the tumors were caused by *H. nana.*

*H. nana* is the most common tapeworm in humans, infecting up to 75 million people worldwide at any given time.

If researchers do find other cases like the Colombian man's, it's not clear what type of treatment would help. Drugs that treat tapeworm infections may not be able to treat cancer cells from tapeworms, the researchers said. But it's possible that human cancer treatment might also work against parasite cancer cells.

The study is published in today's (Nov. 5) issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

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# Ghost stories: The "vampire" of Tarrant Gunville

*Tuesday 27 October 2015*

bournemouthecho.co.uk

*Was the evil steward of Eastbury House a vampire, or a desperate man driven to extremes by debt? We'll let you decide.*

Historian John Ingram wrote in 1897: "Eastbury was begun by Bubb Dodington in 1718. The future Lord Melcombe had projected the house and grounds on a scale of great magnificence ; but when little beyond some less important out-houses had been completed, the work was discontinued, and for six years everything remained at a standstill.

"Eventually the building was resumed and carried on at an enormous expenditure - the total outlay up to 1738, when the house was completed, being stated as one hundred and forty thousand pounds, a far higher sum at that time than now-a-days. The park and grounds were laid out on the same magnificent scale as the house, no expense being spared ; trees half a century old, and some tons in weight, were transported bodily from distant woods and replanted at Eastbury.

"In 1763, a change came over the scene, and Eastbury House was destroyed even more rapidly than it had been created ; all the rooms were dismantled, and the splendid furniture scattered to the winds. Twelve years later the ruin was consummated, the house being pulled down, and the beautiful and costly materials disposed of ; one wing only was left in naked grandeur, and that still exists, but let in tenements to the day-labourers of the Farquharson estate."

So what happened?

Legend has it that owner Lord Melbury lent considerable sums of money to his steward William Doggett. But Dogget gave it to his brother, who got into "difficulties" and was utterly powerless to repay it.  When Lord Melcombe wanted his money back, Doggett - desperate and broke - started to selll the building materials used in the house.

Even that was not enough, and on hearing that Lord Melcombe was on his way to collect his cash," Doggett's courage failed ; he could not pay him, and, therefore, shot himself.
"It was in a marble-floored room that Doggett committed suicide, and it is said the stains of his blood are still visible."

Soon after stories began to circulate that Doggett had returned to stalk the village. His blood-covered face was seen after dark. Doors opend and closed by themselves.

In 1907 Charles Harper wrote that: "Generally at the stroke of midnight, a coach with headless coachman and headless horses drives out and picks up Doggett, down the road."

"If you see an old-world figure at such a time, stepping into that horrid conveyance, you will recognise him as Doggett by his knee-breeches, tied with yellow silk ribbon. The headless coachman asks (out of his neck ?), "Where to, sir ?" and the ghost says, "Home"; whereupon the horses are whipped up, and they drive back to the house. The shade of Doggett, entering,

proceeds to the panelled room where he shot himself a century and a half ago - and shoots himself again !"

In 1845, Tarrant Gunville church was demolished and rebuilt. Workmen exhuming Doggett's body are reported to have found the workmen, exhuming his body, found his legs had been tied together with yellow silk ribbon and his body was not at all decomposed. Different versions of the story have it that there were two vampire teeth visible under his top lip.

His body was dealt with in the "accepted way" for a vampire, and he made no trouble for the village after that.


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**A nearly 500 year old sculpture depicts a man eating a sack of babies, and no one is sure why**

fountains, memento mori, strange statues, unusual monuments

- Photo by User submitted
- Photo by Andrew Bossi/Wikimedia
- Kindlifresser, eating babies

Photo by curiousexpeditions.org







- The "child eater" fountain, Bern, Switzerland

Photo by David Thurbon (used with permission)







Standing in the middle of Bern, Switzerland, is the Kindlifresser, or “Child Eater.”

The fountain sculpture towers above the ground, a baby half stuffed into the giant's mouth,

and a sack full of three alarmed tots slung over his shoulder presumably for later snacking. The unsettling sculpture is no modern work of art; built in 1546, it is one of the oldest fountains in the city of Bern.

Strangely, no one is exactly sure why it's there. There are three main theories. The first and most unfortunate possibility is that the Kindlifresser was built as a sort of warning to the Jewish community of Bern. The Kindlifresser wears a hat that is strikingly similar to the yellow pointed Judenhut that Jews were forced to wear at that time.

The second theory is that the terrifying Ogre is a depiction of Kronos, the Greek Titan. Kronos has arguably one of the most disturbing tales in Greek Mythology. Long story short, Kronos eats all his god children to keep them from taking over his throne.

The final theory is that the Kindlifresser is supposed to be the older brother of Duke Berchtold, the founder of Bern. Apparently the jealousy of being overshadowed by his younger brother for so many years caused him to go mad, eventually sending him into a rage where he collected and ate the town's children. (It would seem likely that this event would have been recorded in the towns history books, which it is not.)

It may of course be none of the above, and is simply a sort of boogie man from Switzerland's Fastnacht, or "Night of Fasting" festival, a way to remind the Children of Bern to behave. Whatever the Kindlifresser represents, it has terrified Swiss children for nearly 500 years, and hopefully, will be there to terrify them for 500 years more.

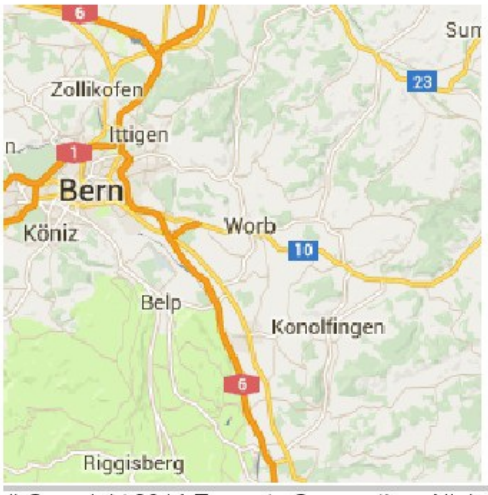
Edited by: SarahAllen, Dylan (Admin), endel, rc6750, Allison (Admin), EricGrundhauser (Admin), DrDive, wythe (Editor)

- **Hours**
- **Website**
    - Visit Bern
- **Address**

  Kindlifresserbrunnen?, Berne, 3011, Switzerland

- **Cost**

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**THE DEATH OF WILLIAM LEMP**
**The First Suicide in the Tragic Beer-Brewing Family**

On this date, February 13, 1904, William Lemp, the patriarch of one of America's greatest beer-brewing families, committed suicide in his home, which was located just down the street from his magnificent brewery.

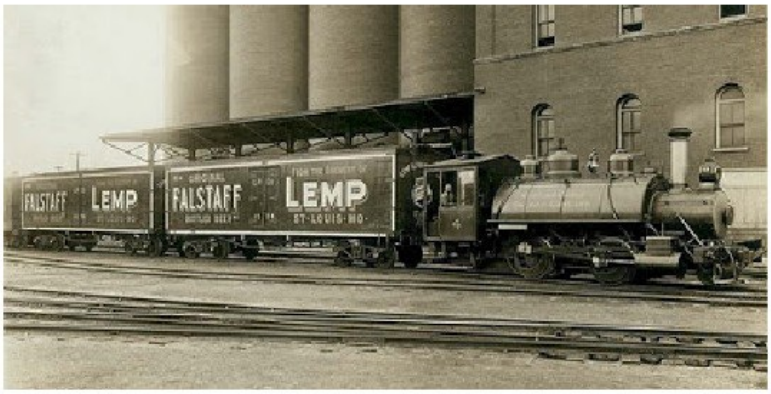


**William Lemp**

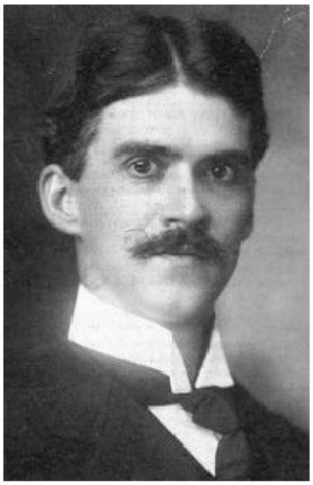
Just a dozen years before, the Lemp brewing empire had reached the summit of its greatness. The size, growth and phenomenal wealth of the business had the family looking with great anticipation toward the new century. They believed, for good reason, that only greater success was coming their way in the 1900s. New construction and renovation were constantly being carried out at the brewery. By the turn of the century, William Lemp had installed a pipeline between the stockhouse and the bottling plant that was unlike anything else in the industry. Fellow brewers, and general tourists, came from around the country to see the pipeline, which had been encased and insulated so that beer could be transported to the bottling machines without any loss of quality or flavor. The new conveyance system was just one of many of William's modern marvels.

By this time, the brewery covered eleven city blocks if the count included the extensive shipping yards that were located along the Mississippi River. It was producing over five hundred thousand barrels of beer every year with annual sales of more than $3.5 million. The Lemps employed 550 men, with another 650 men working in other departments. The brewery was producing six brands of beer, many of them award-winning, including Tip Top, Standard, Extra Pale, Tally, Culmbacher and, of course, Falstaff. They used more than 600 refrigerated railcars to get the beer to the marketplace and shipped it throughout America and to ports around the world.

The future certainly looked bright for the company and for the Lemps themselves as the new




century dawned – but in truth, their future was anything but bright. One December 12, 1901, Frederick Lemp, the heir apparent to the Lemp throne, died of heart failure at the age of 28. His father learned of the news by telegram and while the family was shocked, William was devastated. Brewery secretary Henry Vahlkamp later wrote, "… suddenly the grief of the father was most pathetic. He broke down utterly and cried like a child. It was the first death in the family. He took it so seriously that we feared it would completely shatter his health and looked for the worst to happen."

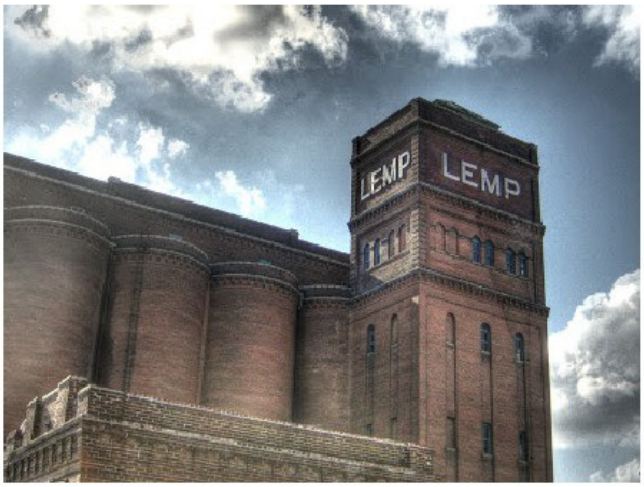


**Frederick Lemp**

William Lemp was never the same after the loss of his favorite son. The events that followed Frederick's death became the first indication that the once-mighty empire was beginning to fall apart.

William Lemp had always been a volatile and passionate man, even though, as a good German, he kept most of those feelings bottled up inside. Those hidden feelings were what made him a good businessmen and his drive for success was what changed the Lemp Brewery from a small, moderately successful local company into a giant national business that had become a force to be reckoned with in the brewing industry. He was a man of great passion, capable of excitable highs, and as his family and friends soon discovered, horrific lows, as well.

When Frederick died in December 1901, William plunged into an abyss of despair. His family and close associate Henry Vahlkamp feared that he might never come out of it. William's friends and even his employees at the brewery said that he was never the same after Frederick died. It was obvious to all of them that he was not coping well and he began to

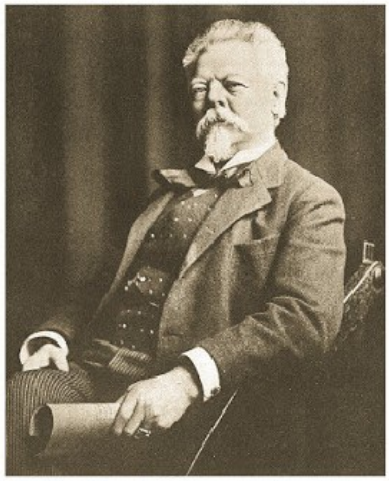



slowly withdraw from the world. He was rarely seen in public and chose to walk to the brewery each day by using the cave system beneath the house. Before his son's death, William had taken pleasure in personally paying the men each week. He also would join the workers in any department and work alongside them in their daily activities or go among them and discuss any problems or questions they had. He took great pleasure in teasing the chiefs of the various departments at the brewery, asking them questions that seemingly had no connection to the business of the day. In order to answer, his men had to not only keep the immediate record on their minds, but they also had to know something about the entire history of their department. After Frederick died, these playful practices ceased almost completely. When he did visit the different departments, it was apparent that he was just there to pass the time. William was distracted and disinterested and his joking manner and quick smile were absent.



**The Lemp family mausoleum at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis**

This went on for nearly two years. William had ordered the construction of a grand mausoleum for his family on Propsect Avenue in Bellefontaine Cemetery, where the city's captains of industry were buried. It was the largest in the cemetery and cost $60,000, an amount worth over $1.6 million today. Frederick had been laid to rest there and William frequently visited the tomb. Eventually, he seemed to find a little peace and hints of a return to his former self began to appear in his manner. He finally seemed to be coping with the death of his favorite son, but it was not meant to last.



**Lemp family friend, Frederick Pabst, the Milwaukee brewer. The two families were closely tied together by friendship and marriage. Hilda Lemp had married Frederick's son, Gustav, and Frederick Lemp had been named after his father's close friend.**

On January 1, 1904, William Lemp suffered another crushing blow with the death of his close friend, Frederick Pabst. This loss made William even more withdrawn and soon he became indifferent to the details of running the brewery. Although he still came to the office each day, he paid little attention to the work and those who knew him said that he seemed nervous and unsettled. It began to seem as though his physical and mental health were beginning to decline.
By February 13, 1904, his suffering had become unbearable.

That morning seemed to be an ordinary one for William Lemp. He arose at his customary hour of 7:00 a.m. and took his time in his personal bathroom, which included a barber's chair, a marble tub and a massive glass-enclosed marble shower stall that was the first of its kind in St. Louis, which William had imported from an Italian hotel for his own use. After dressing, he ate breakfast but remarked to one of his staff that he was not feeling well. Rather than go to the brewery, he excused himself and went back upstairs to his bedroom.

At 9:30 a.m., William shot himself in the head with a .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. There was no one else in the house at the time except for the servants. Julia had gone downtown to do some shopping and Billy and Edwin, the only children in St. Louis at the time, were already at work at the brewery.

A servant girl, upon hearing the sound of the gunshot, rushed to the door but she found it locked. She immediately ran to the brewery office and summoned Billy and Edwin. They hurried back to the house and broke down the bedroom door. Inside, they found their father lying on the bed in a pool of blood, a bloody wound in his right temple and the revolver still gripped in his right hand. At that point, William was still breathing but unconscious.

One of the boys telephoned the family physician, Dr. Henry J. Harnisch, who came at once. He was soon followed by Dr. Henry Schulz, Dr. Andrew Harscher and Dr. Herman L. Nietert, the former head of the city hospital. They quickly examined William but they knew there was

nothing that could be done for him. Dr. Nietert pronounced the wound fatal and waited next to William's bed until death came to claim him.
Meanwhile, one of the staff had managed to reach Julia Lemp at a downtown department store and her driver rushed her home. She arrived only moments before her husband's succumbed to his wound. He was pronounced dead at 10:15 a.m.

William had been dressed for work when he ended his life and there was nothing to suggest that he had made any preparations for suicide, or that he had even contemplated it. There were rumors that he had written a letter detailing his plans and bidding farewell to his family, but this was not the case. There was no suicide note. While it is likely that William took his own life in a fit of depression, there is no way that we will ever know for sure. The motives that he hid deep in his heart will always remain a mystery.

A short time after the shooting, the Lemp home was closed to everyone but relatives and those who had been summoned by the family. Brewery employees were posted at the front of the house to intercept callers and newspaper reporters, who flocked to the scene when word spread of the tragedy. All of the curtains were drawn and the mirrors were draped in black. A dark silence settled on the house, which might have appeared vacant if not for the grim-faced brewery workers who were stationed outside.

Billy and Edwin refused to speak to the newspapermen who had gathered. Edwin returned to the brewery office for a short time in the afternoon but he turned away everyone who came to offer condolences. He did confirm through his assistant that his father had committed suicide and the only explanation that he could give was that he was despondent over the deaths of his son and his friend, Frederick Pabst. Henry Vahlkamp agreed with Edwin and added:

*Mr. Lemp had been looking extremely bad for some time. When he came back from the funeral of Captain Pabst, he was a changed man. They were lifelong friends and the relations between them were very close – so much so that Mr. Lemp felt the death of Captain Pabst as keenly as that of his own son three years ago.*

*I remember when he received word of Fred's death how he went into street and paced up and down. I walked with him and tried to console him, but it was useless. The death of Captain Pabst brought the former trouble back on his mind. He brooded over these matters constantly. I exchanged greetings with him yesterday and noticed that his condition was the same as it had been ever since his return.*

Funeral arrangements began to be made the following day and family members had to be tracked down from all corners of the world. Charles was in Chicago and bought a ticket on the first train returning home. Annie was on a tour of the Orient and her husband, Alexander, was in Europe. Hilda and Gustav rushed to St. Louis from Milwaukee when the news reached them. They were accompanied by Elsa, who was in Milwaukee for a visit. Louis was on his way back from a trip to Japan and his steamship was due to arrive in San Francisco on February 16. He finally arrived home, along with Annie, after the funeral had already taken place.



**The Lemp Mansion**

Services were held in the Lemp mansion on February 14. The body was placed on display in the south parlor, next to the conservatory, which was filled with plants and flowers. Before the funeral took place, more than one thousand Lemp employees filed through the house to view the body and pay their last respects. The brewery had been closed for the day. Once the long stream of men, some openly weeping, had departed, family members and friends gathered for a simple memorial service conducted by Dr. Max Hemple of the German Ethical Society.

After the service, a cortege of forty carriages traveled to Bellefontaine Cemetery. Julia, Elsa and Hilda were too grief-stricken to go to the burial ground. Eight men who had worked for William for more than thirty years served as pallbearers and honorary pallbearers included many notable St. Louis residents, including Adolphus Busch, the owner of the Anheuser-Busch brewery, who had liked and respected his principal competitor. William was placed inside the family mausoleum next to his beloved son, Frederick.

There is no question that William J. Lemp left an indelible mark on the city of St. Louis and the history of American brewing. He was well liked, admired and praised by not only his friends and the people of St. Louis but by his competitors, as well. He was a modest and unpretentious man who did business fairly and honestly. He could dine with the cream of St. Louis society and drink a beer with the lowliest worker on his payroll and get along famously with both. His employees saw him as not only a good boss but as a man that they knew they could go to for aid and advice. Even though most people didn't know it – because it was not his way to speak of his own virtues – William gave away immense sums to charity each year and never thought of his generosity as anything special. He was a fine man but one who allowed his grief and pain to get the better of him, ending a good life before its time.

According to his will, dated February 1, 1904, William left his entire fortune to Julia. The will read:

*I, William J. Lemp, hereby make, publish and declare this to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all previous wills. I direct the payment of my debts and the closing of administration on my estate as rapidly as the law will permit.*

*I give, bequeath and devise to my wife, Julia, all my property, real and personal or mixed, wheresoever situate or whatsoever title held, absolutely.*

*I make no gift her to my children, Annie L. Konta, William J. Lemp, Louis F. Lemp, Charles A. Lemp, Hilda L. Pabst, Edwin A. Lemp, and Elsa J. Lemp, and I make no gift here to my grandchild, Marion Lemp, having perfect confidence that my wife will without any request on my part, and none such is here made, will do best for them.*

*I hereby appoint William J. Lemp, Jr., Louis F, Lemp, Charles A. Lemp, Edwin A. Lemp or either or any of them that may accept and qualify my executor or executors without bond. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 1st day of February, 1904.*

*[signed] William J. Lemp*

At the time of his death, the brewery was estimated to have been worth about $6 million and William's personal estate was valued at $10 million.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:55 AM
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# The first case of pagophagia: the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus - Medievalists.net



By Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou, Costas Tsiamis and Dimitrios Ploumpidis

*Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica*, Vol.13:1 (2015)



*Emperor Theophilus, in the Chronicle of John Skylitzes*

Abstract: The Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829-842 AD) died from dysentery, the exact nature of which is unknown. However, based on the original Greek texts of the Byzantine historians and chroniclers of that era, the possible cause of death may be connected to Theophilus' pagophagia (snow eating), in order to relieve the symptoms of gastric inflammation.

Additionally to the symptoms from the gastro-intestinal system, the Emperor seemed suffering from depress after the defeat of his army and the loss of territories, among whom his native town, Amorion. The current study supports the theoretical possibility that the case of pagophagia in the 9th century AD, so well described by a great number of historians because of the sufferer's royal identity, extends in the past the knowledge on pica, still attracting the medical interest.

Introduction: Pagophagia is the excessive or exclusive consumption of ice, snow or iced water, broadly regarded as a manifestation of pica. Pica is defined as a form of appetite disorder, presenting as the persistent eating of non-nutritive substances and has been described since antiquity. Some researchers extend the narrow definition to include the eating of both food and non-food items, while others classify the picas into food, non-food and mixed types. As a kind of inappropriate behaviour, pica is frequently associated with mental retardation, but it has been observed in all ages and both sexes, and particularly in young children and pregnant women. The most common types of substances ingested are earth (geophagia), ice (pagophagia), chalk, grass, cloth, paper; the eating patterns are referred to as "-phagias". This paper describes a unique case of snow consumption by the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829-842 AD), who according to the narrations of the historians and chroniclers of those times was an ice eater, developing a pathologic craving for iced water and snow. Theophilus' health problems are commented in accordance with this habit and an explanation for the causes of his death is attempted.

The term *pica* derives from the Latin word for magpie (*kissa* in Greek), named after the bird's peculiar eating behaviour and indiscriminate selection of edible and non-edible items. The




terms *geophagia* and *pagophagia* derive from the Greek verb *phagein* (to eat) and the words *Gaia* (earth) and *pagos* (ice) respectively. Pica of earth and clay was a well-known entity and the first description of *geophagia* in connection with pregnancy is traced in the Hippocratic Collection: If a pregnant woman feels the desire to eat earth or charcoal and then eats them, the child's head will show signs of these things. Soranus (1st-2nd centuries AD) the most famous gynaecologist of antiquity also described pica during pregnancy: *Some people say that pica (kissa) has been thus termed from a certain bird but others, however, say that it has been termed this from the ivy (kissos), for it twines around in a way that also varies. It usually sets around the 40th day and then persists for about four months. Women are affected by the following: appetite for things not customary like earth, charcoal, tendrils of the vine, unripe and acid fruit*.

Filed Under: Articles Tagged With: Byzantium, Medicine, Ninth Century

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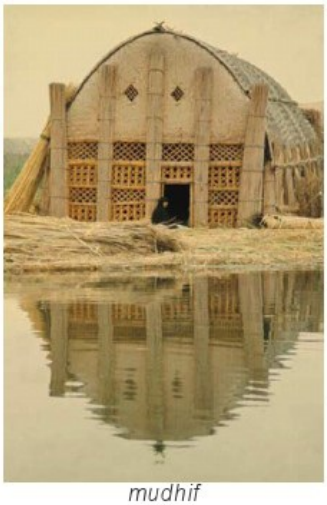
# The Floating Basket Homes of Iraq: A Paradise almost Lost to Saddam

*12th Nov, 2014* messynessychic.com



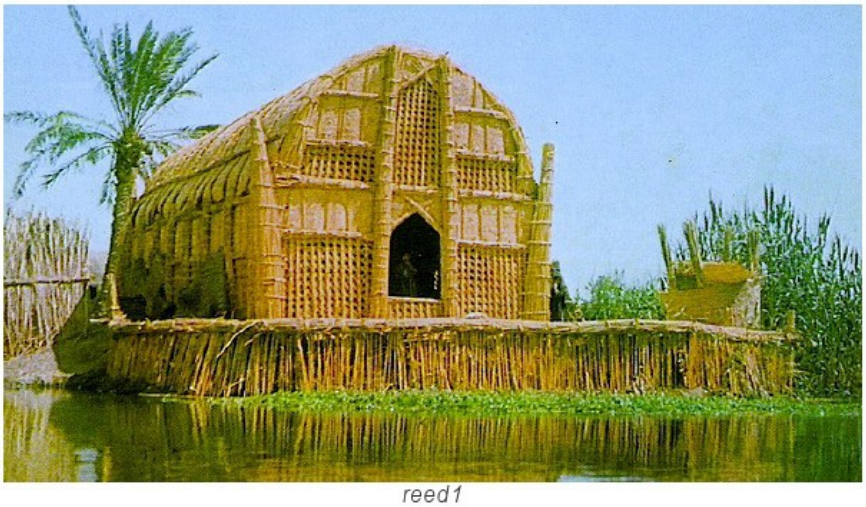
*Marsh Arab Village*

*I*t was Iraq's 'Garden of Eden'; unique wetlands in southern Iraq where a people known as the Ma'dan, or 'Arabs of the marsh', lived in a Mesopotamian Venice, characterised by beautifully elaborate floating houses made entirely of reeds harvested from the open water.



*mudhif*

These little-known architectural wonders are known as a 'mudhif'; built without nails, wood or glass in under three days, even the islands the houses rest on are made of compacted mud and rushes.



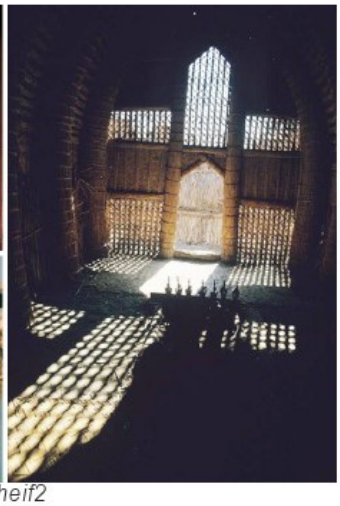
*reed1*

It's a construction method that has been used by the dwellers of the plains for thousands of years, but in recent decades, this exotic architecture has almost completely disappeared, and at risk of being lost along with it of course, is the ancient knowledge of the unique building technique itself.

Why would such a beautiful waterworld disappear, you ask? As with most of the injustice that marred Iraq during the late 20th century the destruction of this Middle Eastern paradise came at the hands of one defiant







*mudheif2*

dictator, Saddam Hussein. The marshes and their floating reed homes had for some time been considered a refuge for those persecuted by the government of Hussein, and in past centuries they had been a refuge for escaped slaves and serfs.

During the 1991 uprisings in Iraq, Saddam Hussein drained the unique wetlands of southern Iraq as a punishment to the marsh arabs who had backed the uprising and allegedly given refuge to militiamen the government regarded as terrorists.



*_MG_6386*

The Iraqi government aggressively revived a 1970s irrigation project that had initially been abandoned after it began to disrupt the flow of water to the marshes. Very quickly, their food source was eliminated, their villages were attached and burnt down and their lush paradise systematically converted into a desert. What little water remained was reportedly poisoned.



*_MG_6540*

Residents in their thousands were forced from their settlements, abandoning their traditional lifestyle in favour of towns and camps in other areas of Iraq or to Iranian refugee camps. Only 1,600 of of the nearly half million Marsh Arabs recorded in the 1950s were estimated to still be living in the traditional housing in the new millenium.

It was considered a lost culture until a remarkable recovery began to take place in 2003 when local communities began breaching Saddam Husseins's dikes after the U.S. invasion of Iraq. A four year drought also came to an end that same year and the wetlands have now been restored to cover more than 50% of the 1970s water levels (pictured above). The ecosystem however may take far longer to restore than it took to destroy and many of the Marsh Arabs have moved on and those that return are greeted with no clean drinking water, poor sanitation, and no health care or education facilities.



deserm

Only miles away from cities devastated by war, there are few willing to risk their lives to save a marsh and its dwindling eco-friendly community, however, there is hope. Nature Iraq, founded by an Iraqi-American hydraulic engineer who gave up his life in California to help restore the country's lost garden of eden, is leading efforts with financial support from the United States, Canada, Japan, and Italy.



marsh

One of their most recent efforts to rebuild the Ma'dan community saw the organisation re-construct a traditional mudhif, to demonstrate how the alternative, low-cost and sustainable building methods could work once again.

In the spirit of the Ma'dan community, which throughout history has given refuge to those in need, the reed abode acts as a guest house, offering accommodation for long-term stays, as well as a community centre where locals and travellers alike can have meals and share discussions about the future of Iraq's garden of Eden. You can follow the progress on Facebook with **Nature Iraq here**.



mudheif1

Who knows? One day you might be gliding through the channels of Iraq's wetlands lined with beautiful reed houses as flocks of birds fly through the reddish evening sky above.

*Images via **Flickr, Tracy Shelton and Google images***



buildingmudeif



marshlands

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# The great exorcism boom

by **Andrew Chesnut**
posted Thursday, 5 Nov 2015



*Fr Marcelo Rossi celebrates 'liberation Masses' for those who feel possessed (AP)*

From Manila to Mexico City Catholic priests are leading a new and sometimes spectacular crusade against demonic possession

Exorcism has become so popular worldwide that now it's not only performed on tormented individuals but also on entire nations. A few months ago Mexico, the second largest Catholic country, was exorcised of its demons in an unprecedented rite of exorcismo magno performed in secret in the city of San Luis Potosí.

On May 20, the renowned Spanish exorcist Fr José Antonio Fortea, author of the book El Exorcismo Magno, joined Cardinal Juan Sandoval Íñiguez, Archbishop Emeritus of Guadalajara, and a cadre of trained exorcists to perform the maximum type of exorcism, reserved for nations and dioceses, on the Mexican Republic itself. Fr Fortea explained that exorcismo magno is "useful in situations in which great violence has been unleashed in a country".

Mexico has been plagued by hyper-violence since 2006, when former president Felipe Calderón launched an unprecedented assault on some of the major drug cartels. Since then an estimated 151,000 Mexicans have died and another 26,000 have disappeared in the ongoing battles over access to the largest drug market on earth: the US.

Francis, the first Latin American pope, has paid special attention to the conflict in Mexico and will visit the embattled nation early next year.

The chief reason the Pope recently raised Archbishop Alberto Suárez Inda of Morelia to the rank of cardinal was his condemnation of the narco-violence plaguing his home state of Michoacan. The Pontiff even got himself in a bit of hot water with his recent warning to his native Argentina to avoid "Mexicanisation" (rising narco-violence). And if the Mexican folk saint, Santa Muerte (Saint Death), has been condemned by the Vatican and is denounced on a weekly basis in Mexico, it's because the Church views the skeleton saint as the poster child of the narco-culture of death. A cadre of Catholic exorcists in Mexico, and even an American bishop in Texas, now specialise in performing exorcisms on parishioners who have been

possessed by the spirit of the skeletal folk saint.

Demand for both Pentecostal and Catholic exorcism was already booming worldwide well before Cardinal Bergoglio became Pope. His informal exorcism performed on a Mexican parishioner in a wheelchair two years ago has made the rite of demonic deliverance even more popular. The Mexican priest who brought the afflicted parishioner to Rome presented him to the Pope as demon-possessed. Having observed hundreds of such exorcisms during the course of my research in Latin America, I recognised the Pope's firm and determined laying of both hands on the head of the afflicted young man as an informal exorcism in the form of a deliverance prayer.

Since the late 1980s, competition with Pentecostalism has led to the formation of a cadre of Latin American priests affiliated to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), which specialises in "liberation" or exorcism ministries. Such is the current demand for release from demonic possession that some priests, such as the Brazilian Charismatic superstar Fr Marcelo Rossi, even celebrate "liberation Masses" on a weekly basis.

Acknowledging his pastoral debt to Brazilian Pentecostal leader Bishop Edir Macedo, whose Universal Church of the Kingdom of God brought exorcism to the fore of spirit-centred Christianity in Latin America, Fr Rossi stated in an interview that "it was Bishop Edir Macedo who woke us up. He got us up."

Behind closed doors, CCR lay leaders also practise unofficial exorcism on believers manifesting symptoms of satanic influence. Many bishops feel such unsanctioned exorcisms are a threat to their ecclesiastical authority and have issued statements denouncing the practice. In its official statement of approval of the CCR in 1986, the Guatemalan bishops' conference referred to "irregularities" with exorcisms and reminded Charismatics that the rite can only be performed by priests with proper episcopal consent.

As the CCR has expanded among the working classes of the Global South, demand for physical healing and exorcism has become much greater than in the past.

In the Philippines, where the majority of Catholics are Charismatics, there is even a shortage of trained exorcists, which has led the Archdiocese of Manila to recruit dozens of new ones.

Many impoverished urban Catholics, like their Pentecostal counterparts, seek divine resolution of their poverty-related afflictions. Thus, grassroots Charismatics typically implore the Holy Spirit to empower them to overcome such afflictions as alcoholism, unemployment, physical illness, domestic strife and demonic oppression. In Brazil and much of the Caribbean, the latter often takes the form of possession by the exús, or liminal trickster spirits of Candomble, Umbanda and other African diasporan religions.

Like Pope Francis, Catholic Charismatics are very focused on the role of the Devil and see his hand is such "vices" as soap operas and drinking. Exorcism in the CCR, however, has not developed to the point that it has in the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and other neo-Pentecostal denominations where the demons (in the form of Umbanda or Candomble spirits) are actually invoked, then to be expelled in dramatic fashion by combative pastors.

As shocking as it may be to some Catholics in the Global North, Pope Francis's informal exorcism and the exorcismo magno of Mexico itself neatly capture the rising importance of the Global South, where prayers for deliverance from evil are common Catholic (and Pentecostal) currency. It would appear that the first pope from the Global South has not only opted for the poor but has also adopted a preferential option for the Holy Spirit.

*Andrew Chesnut holds the Bishop Walter F Sullivan Chair in Catholic Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and is the author of numerous books and articles on religion in Latin America, including Competitive Spirits: Latin America's New Religious Economy.*

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by Lyz Lenz
Oct 26, 2015 8:26 AM



*Image via Wikipedia*

Something far more sinister than an R.A. is haunting these schools' halls.

As long as there have been colleges, they have been haunted. As Elizabeth Tucker, folklorist, Professor of English at Binghamton University and author of *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses*, explained in an interview, "Campus ghost stories have distinctive patterns, because they are told by young people who are going through a big transition in their lives: the liminal stage between adolescence and adulthood. Campus ghosts reflect both the issues and stresses that come up at college and movement toward adulthood, an exciting but relatively unfamiliar stage of life."

College ghosts reflect the fears and the context of our time in a way that few other ghosts can. They also allow students to explore the raw edges of society, morality, and history in a way that is relatively safe. After all, ghosts aren't real anyway. Right? *Right?* Analyzing these collegiate ghosts like a literary text provides insight into the American psyche that is as disturbing and illuminating as the ghosts themselves.

**From Oxford to Harvard**

Pinpointing the first college ghost is a bit like proving ghosts exist: tricky. According to Tucker, the first campus haunting occurred in Oxford, England. "Archbishop William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, has haunted Saint John's College, where he lived as a student, ever since he was beheaded in 1645," she said. "Students say they know the Archbishop is nearby when they hear the sound of someone kicking a soccer ball. If they look up, they will see that it's not a soccer ball but his head! Pleasantly creepy. Any of us who have read J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books have learned about ghosts similar to Oxford's: Nearly Headless Nick, Moaning Myrtle, and the others."

Laud's ghost is playful, quite literally playing with his detached head. But he also points to the anxieties with England's gory religious history, when intellectual disagreements over the role of faith in society often led to death and eventually sparked a revolution. These anxieties still persist in a rigorous academic setting where intellectual discussion and disagreement is encouraged. Thus, Laud's playfulness gives students the ability to control their anxieties about going against the establishment.

> Students say they know the Archbishop is nearby when they hear the sound of someone kicking a soccer ball. If they look up, they will see that it's not a soccer ball but his head!

America's oldest university, too, is also its most haunted. Harvard's Lowell House, named after former president Abbott Lawrence Lowell, is reportedly haunted by his sister, Pulitzer Prize winning poet Amy Lowell. Amy Lowell was a gifted writer, but, because of rules barring women from higher education, she was unable to attend Harvard. Harvard began accepting women into its school of education in 1920, five years before Lowell died. Consequently, she spent much of her life and death roaming the halls of the

school. Sam Baltrusis writes in his book, *Ghosts of Cambridge: Haunts of Harvard Square and Beyond*, that while many have seen apparitions of this poet, she is mostly known by the scent of her cigar smoke. No matter how long she haunts the halls of Harvard, Lowell is a perpetual outsider—first as a woman in a world of men and now as a spirit in the world of flesh. She is also a reminder of higher education's exclusivity and bias against women.

**Native Americans and the Civil War**

Often, college ghosts aren't those who lived within the ivory tower, but rather those left outside. Many schools report hauntings by Native Americans who once owned the land that the largely white institutions now occupy. These are what Tucker calls "cultural hauntings." A cultural haunting, according to Tucker, "unsettles and troubles its perceivers; it involves obscure and difficult issues, as well as a little-known history and a strong sense of guilt."

The College of William and Mary, America's second oldest institute of higher education, first allowed admission to Native Americans in 1700, but few actually attended. Instead, the government sent prisoners of war and forced them to receive an education. They did this in order to convert the Native Americans into good Christians. The college's Royal charter states as one of its missions, "that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God...."

A student touring the campus in 2000 heard a ghost story from a tour guide about a Native American boy who was forced to attend the college against his will. He escaped one night and was found dead in the forest. In *Haunted Halls*, Tucker quotes the student as saying, "It was rumored that it was a set-up, that some Indian hater killed him. In the attic of the dorm where the boy lived, you can hear drum beats and feet dancing." This ghost story contains a strong sense of historical anxiety. And, although it was cheerfully recited by a tour guide, it reveals a darkness in the history of the college.

> A cultural haunting unsettles and troubles its perceivers; it involves little-known history and a strong sense of guilt.

The whole institution of Tennessee Wesleyan College embraces its indigenous ghosts. There, students and faculty tell the story of a Native American, Nocatual, and a British soldier. The British soldier was injured during a battle and befriended by the tribe, who gave him the name Connestoga. Connestoga and Nocatula fell in love, but a jealous rival killed Connestoga, who died along with him by stabbing herself in the heart. The college has trees planted with the names of the two thwarted lovers. Students report hearing Nocatula and Connestoga calling to one another across the campus. In this case, the story of outsiders has been reinvented to represent and support campus spirit—taking ghosts that could instill historical guilt and unease and using them to glorify the school and its heritage.

Native Americans of the past aren't the only historical figures that haunt college campuses. Margee Kerr, the author of *Scream: Chilling Adventures in the Science of Fear*, recalls that her alma matter, Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia, was haunted by legions of ghosts. Students at Mount Saint Mary's take pride in one campus ghost, a Civil War soldier who was buried upside down and can be heard shouting, "turn me over!" According to campus legend, it's possible to see whole troops of Confederate soldiers marching through the trees on campus. Like stories of Indian hauntings, these Confederate dead both inspire regional pride and historical anxiety. Some ghost stories are pushed to the margins, whereas others are appropriated as symbols of pride; in this way, ghosts provide students with a real lesson in American traditions.

**Drugs and Alcohol**

College ghosts have a knack for the zeitgeist. And college has always been about experimentation, especially with drugs and alcohol. In *Haunted Halls*, Tucker tells a ghost story that appropriately comes from the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley, where it's rumored that the ghost of a stoned student haunts the girls' dorm. All he does is come into the room and smoke pot. That's it. They call him



*Archbishop William Laud, who kicks his head around Saint John's College. Image via Wikipedia.*

Stoney Ghosty. Tucker explains that, while Stoney Ghosty is goofy and unthreatening, he represents the anxieties of drugs that haunt college campuses. College is a time when many students start experimenting with drugs, and girls are often warned about predators who might want to slip Rohypnol in their drinks. Stoney Ghosty is a man, but he lives in a girl's dorm. He is representative of the male threat and fears of drugs, but he's also something easily laughed off.

Stories about ghosts who died while drinking evoke similar anxieties. At Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, students tell the story of a fraternity brother who died after getting so drunk that his friends dragged him up to the attic of the Kappa Delta House and left him there. The house now holds a sorority, and they report hearing footsteps of the drunk brother, shuffling back and forth—a spectral reminder not only about alcohol poisoning but also that students should take care of one another. And, like Stoney Ghosty, his presence in a girls' dorm underscores anxieties about drunken fraternity brothers preying on women.

**Rape and Domestic Violence**

Rape isn't merely the subtext of ghost stories like Stony Ghosty or the frat boy in the attic: Sometimes it is the whole text. In many ghost stories about raped women, their cries for help come only after their deaths. Tucker recounts a story from a Binghamton University student who heard a story of the "Tie Dye Girl." She haunts the elevator of a building on campus, where her presence is marked by a metallic clanging and then screams. The story holds that the girl was once a college student who was raped and murdered by her boyfriend. Her spirit is now trapped in the elevator, and her screams remind girls to watch out for dangerous men. Other stories follow similar motifs—like the story from the University of Main at Orono, where the screams of a girl raped and murdered in her dorm echo through the halls on the anniversary of her death.

> Even if the ghost cannot talk, she can scream—and she keeps on screaming until current students understand what happened to her.

There are hundreds of stories like these, even on my own campus, where faculty and administrators disavowed any ghosts. As freshmen, my female classmates and I began to trade in stories that we knew were fiction—stories about girls, raped and murdered, screaming endlessly for justice, warning us with their presence. Even though we knew they were fiction, they felt real because our fears were real.

Tucker writes in her book, "The horror and hesitation to speak come through in students' ghost stories about wailing women. Along with the painful limitations, a sense of power emerges from these narratives. Even if the ghost cannot talk, she can scream—and she keeps on screaming until current students understand what happened to her." Women haven't been able to openly discuss the realities of campus rape until recently, but these dead women have been screaming to be heard on campuses for centuries.

**The Future of Campus Ghosts**

Campus culture is rapidly changing. In her book, Tucker writes that ghosts often act to reassure the anxieties of students suddenly thrust into a world of shifting perceptions, history, and morality. She explained in an interview, "One residential college on our campus has a ghost called Charlene, who loves to bake brownies and do laundry; she also goes wild over the color pink and likes to steal pink clothes from dryers. Charlene represents the old gender stereotype for women: cooking and laundry as the acme of happiness. That is hardly the aspiration of most college women today, but the stereotype is, I think, comfortingly familiar... People enjoy hearing familiar stories."

Tucker doesn't just predict that ghost will remain static, just that the changes might not be evident. Many campus ghost stories involve students seeing the reflection of dead men in the mirror. I asked Tucker if this is a reflection of the fact that many people perceive the dark animus that lies dormant in college campuses to be male. She agreed, but noted: "My University just got its first transgender bathrooms, and faculty members are learning that the usual matching of male and female pronouns with male and female names may not be correct. Mirror ghosts reflect gender perception, so I expect there will be more complex and varied ghosts in mirrors in the years ahead."

College is itself a ghost hunt—it's an intellectual search for answers to the questions that haunt us as a society. And whether ghost will dig in or reach out is for time to tell. But they will remain.

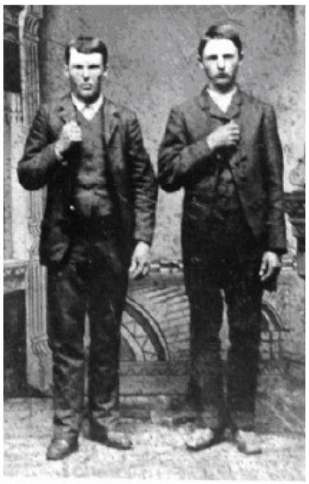
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**Monday, February 18, 2013**

## THE LAST RIDE OF FRANK JAMES
### Death of the Outlaw Brother

On this day, February 18, 1915, famous American outlaw – and brother of Jesse James – Alexander Franklin "Frank" James died on his farm near Excelsior Springs, Missouri. Frank long outlived his more infamous brother, eventually retiring from a life of crime and joining the western show circuit in the dying days of the real "Wild West."



**Frank James (Right) and his more infamous brother, Jesse**

Frank was born in Kearney, Missouri to Baptist minister Reverend Robert Sallee James and his wife Zerelda (Cole) James, who had moved from Kentucky. He was the oldest of three children. His father died in 1851 and his mother re-married Benjamin Simms in 1852. After his death, she married a third time to Dr. Reuben Samuel in 1855 when Frank was 13 years old. As a boy, there was little hint about Frank's wild life to come… He showed great interest in his father's sizable library, especially the works of William Shakespeare and he attended school regularly. According to all recollections, he had plans to become a teacher. But then the Civil War got in the way.

Frank was 18 when the Civil War broke out in 1861. Initially, Frank and his younger brother, Jesse, stayed on the family farm, but soon, the violence of the outside world began to intrude on their peaceful farm life. The area where the James family lived was near the turbulent Missouri-Kansas border. Zerelda, a formidable frontier woman, had been raised in Kentucky and was a slave owner, so there was no question that her sympathies were directed toward the South. In May 1861, Frank James enlisted in the Confederate Army. He fought under General Sterling Price in the battle of Wilson's Creek in southwest Missouri and then on September 13, 1861, the Missouri raiders, including Frank James, besieged Lexington, Missouri. Frank fell ill and was left behind when the Confederate forces later retreated. He surrendered to the Union troops, was paroled, and was allowed to return home. On his

arrival, however, he was arrested by the local pro-Union militia and was forced to sign an oath of allegiance to the Union.

By early 1863, Frank, ignoring his parole and oath of allegiance, had joined the guerrilla band of Fernando Scott, a former saddler. He soon switched to the more active command led by William Clarke Quantrill. Frank, and his friend, Thomas Coleman "Cole" Younger were with Quantrill during the 1863 raid on Lawrence, Kansas.

The raid, which has come to be known as the Lawrence Massacre, or Quantrill's raid, was an attack that was led by a band of Quantrill's men against the pro-Union town of Lawrence. The town was known as a staging area for "Redleggers" and "Jayhawkers", which were essentially free-state militias and vigilante groups who made a practice of attacking and burning farms along the western border of Missouri, an area sympathetic to the Confederacy.

The Lawrence raid was masterfully planned by Quantrill. He joined together with a number of other independent guerilla bands and chose the time and day of the attack well in advance. The different groups of Missouri riders approached Lawrence from the east, during the pre-dawn hours. The riders were armed with multiple, long-barreled, cap and ball revolvers, shoved crossways into their double-breasted shirtfronts so that they would not have to reload during the heat of the battle. Quantrill, leading nearly 400 men, descended on Lawrence in a fury. Mayhem ensued during a four-hour frenzy of pillaging, burning and mass executions of most of Lawrence's male population. By the time that Quantrill's men rode out of town, one-quarter of Lawrence's buildings had been burned to the ground, including all but two businesses. Most of the banks and stores were looted and between 185 and 200 men and boys were dead in the streets.

The Lawrence Massacre remains one of the bloodiest events in the history of Kansas and the Jayhawkers wasted no time in retaliating. A day after the attack, surviving citizens of Lawrence lynched a member of Quantrill's raiders caught in town. On August 25, General Ewing authorized orders that evicted thousands of Missourians in four counties from their homes near the Kansas border. The raids were vicious, thorough and indiscriminate and left the western part of the state wasted and in flames.

The retaliation continued for months afterward. Just three months after the Lawrence raid, a party of Union soldiers invaded the James family farm, looking for information about the location of Quantrill's camp. Jesse, who was just 15 years old at the time, was questioned, then horse-whipped when he refused to answer the soldiers' questions. Dr. Samuel, who also denied knowing where the raider's camp was located, was dragged from his house and was repeatedly hanged from a tree in the yard. Somehow, the doctor managed to survive the interrogation, but his mental state was so affected by the ordeal that he was placed in an asylum in St. Joseph. He remained there until his death in 1908.

After the war, refusing to surrender to the authorities they believed had oppressed them before and after the war, turned to the outlaw life. During his years as a bandit, Frank was involved in at least four robberies between 1868 and 1876 that resulted in the deaths of bank

employees or citizens. The most famous incident was the disastrous Northfield, Minnesota, raid on September 7, 1876, that ended with the death or capture of most of the gang.

Five months after the killing of his brother Jesse in 1882, Frank James boarded a train to Jefferson City, Missouri, where he had an appointment with the governor in the state capitol. Placing his holster in Governor Crittenden's hands, he explained, “I have been hunted for twenty-one years, have literally lived in the saddle, have never known a day of perfect peace. It was one long, anxious, inexorable, eternal vigil.' He then ended his statement by saying, 'Governor, I haven't let another man touch my gun since 1861.”



**Frank James in 1898**

Accounts say that James surrendered with the understanding that he would not be extradited to Northfield, Minnesota. He was tried for only two of the robberies/murders – one in Gallatin, Missouri for the July 15, 1881 robbery of the Rock Island Line train at Winston, Missouri, in which the train engineer and a passenger were killed, and the other in Huntsville, Alabama for the March 11, 1881 robbery of a United States Army Corps of Engineers payroll at Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Among others, former Confederate General Joseph Orville Shelby testified on James' behalf in the Missouri trial. He was acquitted in both Missouri and Alabama. Missouri accepted legal jurisdiction over him for other charges, but they never came to trial. He was never extradited to Minnesota for his connection with the Northfield Raid.

Even in those days, the legend and affection for the James Brothers meant that Frank did little jail time for his crimes. After his surrender James was taken to Independence, Missouri, where he was held in jail three weeks, and later to Gallatin, where he remained in jail a year awaiting trial. Finally, James was acquitted and went to Oklahoma to live with his mother. He never was in the penitentiary and never was convicted of any of the charges against him.

In the last thirty years of his life, James worked a variety of jobs, including as a shoe salesman and then as a Burlesque theater ticket taker in St. Louis. One of the theater's spins to attract patrons was their use of the phrase "Come get your ticket punched by the legendary Frank James." He also served as an AT&T telegraph operator in St. Joseph, Missouri. James took up the lecture show and “Wild West” circuit, while residing in Sherman, Texas. In 1902, former Missourian Sam Hildreth, a leading thoroughbred horse trainer and owner, hired

James as the betting commissioner at the Fair Grounds Race Track in New Orleans. He returned to the North Texas area where he was a shoe salesman at Sanger Brothers in Dallas.




**In his final years, Frank eked out a living offering guided tours of the James family farm**

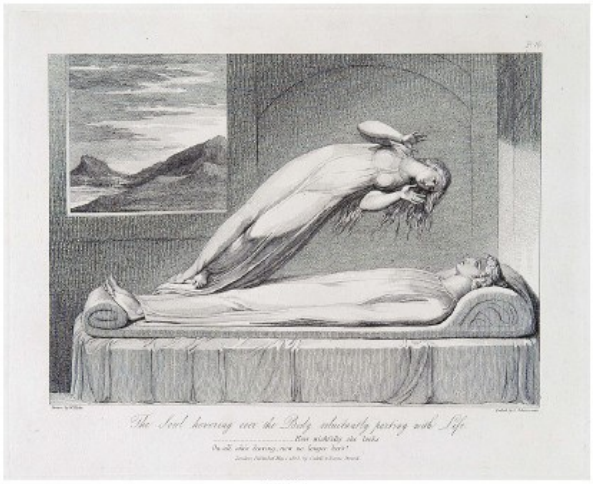
In his final years, James returned to the James Farm, giving tours for the sum of 25 cents. He died there on February 18, 1915. He was 72 years old and a largely forgotten figure that would only find fame much later, when interest in the old west became an American obsession.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:17 AM

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By Ben Thomas | November 3, 2015 3:00 pm



*943px-Robert_Blair,_The_Grave,_object_7_(Bentley435.6)_The*

In 1907, a Massachusetts doctor named Duncan MacDougall performed an unusual series of experiments. Intrigued by the idea that the human soul had mass, and could therefore be weighed, Dr. MacDougall put together a bed fitted with a sensitive set of beam scales, and convinced a series of terminally ill patients to lie on it during the final moments of their lives.

MacDougall was nothing if not detail-oriented: He recorded not only each patient's exact time of death, but also his or her total time on the bed, as well as any changes in weight that occurred around the moment of expiration. He even factored losses of bodily fluids like sweat and urine, and gases like oxygen and nitrogen, into his calculations. His conclusion was that the human soul weighed three-fourths of an ounce, or 21 grams.

It's hard to imagine these experiments getting any serious attention from the scientific community today. But the lines of thinking that led to them — and the reactions they generated — remain with us to this day.



SOUL HAS WEIGHT, PHYSICIAN THINKS

Dr. Macdougall of Haverhill Tells of Experiments at Death.

LOSS TO BODY RECORDED

Scales Showed an Ounce Gone in One Case, He Says—Four Other Doctors Present.

*Special to The New York Times.*

BOSTON, March 10.—That the human soul has a definite weight, which can be determined when it passes from the body, is the belief of Dr. Duncan Macdougall, a reputable physician of Haverhill. He is at the head of a Research Society which for six years has been experimenting in this field. With him, he says, have been associated four other physicians.

*soul_has_weight*

### A Year in the Spotlight

The results of MacDougall's study appeared in *The New York Times* in March 1907. The article set off a debate between MacDougall and the physician Augustus P. Clarke, who "had a field day" with MacDougall's minuscule measurement techniques.

Clarke pointed out that at the moment of death, the lungs stop cooling the blood, causing the body's temperature to rise slightly, which makes the skin sweat — accounting for Dr. MacDougall's missing 21 grams. MacDougall fired back in the next issue, arguing that circulation ceases at the moment of death, so the skin wouldn't be heated by the rise in temperature. The debate ran all the way to the end of 1907, picking up supporters on both sides along the way.

For four years, all was quiet on the MacDougall front, but in 1911 he graced The New York Time's front page with an announcement that he'd upped the ante. This time, he wouldn't be weighing the human soul — he'd be photographing it at the moment it left the body.

Although he expressed concern that "the soul substance might become [too] agitated" to be

photographed at the moment of death, he did manage to perform a dozen experiments in which he photographed “a light resembling that of the interstellar ether” in or around patients’ skulls at the moments they died.

MacDougall himself passed away into the interstellar ether in 1920, leaving behind a small band of ardent supporters, along with a far larger group of physicians who seemed incredulous that this farce had gone on so long. Members of the public settled down on one side or the other, and the discussion fell off the radar.

Except that it never really did — at least not completely.

**A Legacy of Oddity**

References to MacDougall’s experiments continue to spring forth in pop culture every few years, from the Victorian era right up to today. The idea that the soul weighs 21 grams has appeared in novels, songs, and movies — it’s even been the title of a film. Dan Brown described MacDougall’s experiments in some detail in his adventure yarn *The Lost Symbol*.

Mention the soul-weighing experiments to a person who’s into parapsychology, and you’ll likely hear a murmur of approval; after all, the idea of scientific proof for the soul offers comfort in much the same way that tarot readings and hotline spiritualists do. Even among more skeptical folks, it’s a topic that comes up now and then in late-night discussions: “Wasn’t there once a guy who tried to weigh the soul…?”

The experiments’ actual results, and their failure to achieve acceptance as scientific canon, are entirely beside the point. Science has gone one way, and pop culture another. Functional neuroimaging has tied every conceivable function once associated with the soul to specific regions and structures of the brain. Physics has mapped the linkages between subatomic particles so thoroughly that there’s simply no space left for spiritual forces.

And yet…

The idea of weighing the soul remains with us. It’s romantic. It’s relatable. It speaks to some of our deepest longings and fears that gripped MacDougall’s readers back in 1907 and still captivate us today.

**A Different Kind of Eeriness**

To understand why MacDougall wanted to weigh the soul — and why he thought he could — it helps to understand the environment in which he operated. His work is rife with terms and ideas recognizable from early psychological theorists Freud and Jung. There’s a lot of talk about “psychic functions” and “animating principles” — a grasping for the precise scientific language to describe consciousness, and life itself, in a world still ignorant of fMRI and DNA.

We’re still profoundly ignorant today, as any honest scientist will tell you. Certain behaviors of quantum particles still baffle the brightest minds; and we’re still a long way from understanding exactly how our brains do most of what they do. We keep looking for the dark matter that constitutes more than 80 percent of the universe’s mass, but we haven’t actually

*seen* a single atom of it or know where, exactly, it is.



*dark_matter*

And in all these dark corners, we still find people looking for the soul. Some claim we'll eventually discover it among quantum particles. Others insist it's got something to do with the electromagnetic waves our brains generate. Most scientists reject these claims. But these researchers and theorists soldier on, unwilling to give up hope that one day we'll be able to weigh, measure and quantify the hereafter.

MacDougall's work resonated, and continues to resonate, not because of what he found (or failed to find) but because of what he *suggested*. The simple idea behind the experiments was appealing, and for many who followed the debate in *The New York Times*, that idea alone was enough to make MacDougall's work worthy of discussion.

But in 1907, as today, the real, testable, verifiable universe continually proves to be much stranger than anything parapsychology can dream up. How are photons both particles and waves and yet somehow neither? How can there be so many planets in our galaxy, yet so few that harbor life — we think — as we know it? The universe is full of real unsolved mysteries, whose real answers are out there somewhere.

We don't need the souls of the dead to craft a haunting series of experiments. The measurable, physical universe is more than eerie enough.

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**The Most Haunted Museum in Paris … for Vampires**

By Fiona ZublinOCT 292015

**Why you should care**

Because it doesn't suck.

The ghost has appeared six times. Each time, it sits in the same orange velvet armchair. Jacques Sirgent, curator of the premier — OK, the only — vampire museum in Paris, doesn't mind. The apparition is apparently Sirgent's grandfather, who killed himself, "for love," by jumping from a tree in the tiny yard outside the museum.

Located on the outskirts of the city, the Museum of Vampires and Monsters of the Imagination is not for the faint of heart. First of all, it's haunted. Second, there's a loaded crossbow on the wall made specifically for fighting vampires, of which Sirgent is a diligent student. Despite the weapon, he's actually got a soft spot for history's esteemed monsters; he's written a book on Countess Elizabeth Báthory, thought by some to be the most prolific female murderer of all time and infamous for allegedly bathing in blood, and how she was probably framed. The museum, which fills one room that is about the size of a large American garage, is stuffed to the teeth with occult artifacts and vampire memorabilia both high-brow — one of the Underwood typewriters Bram Stoker used to write *Dracula* — and low (several bottles of *Dracula*-themed wine and a collection of signed photos from every actor who ever played Dracula, except for David Niven).

> At university, curator Sirgent "specialized in studying the physical embodiment of evil."

Sirgent's vampire obsession began at the age of 10, when he used 50 francs from his grandmother to buy a poster of *Dracula Has Risen From the Grave*, starring Christopher Lee. He's also a respected scholar, responsible for the first complete translation of *Dracula* into French, and is currently preparing part of his collection to be sent to China for a temporary exhibition on vampires. At university, he "specialized in studying the physical embodiment of evil." Visitors to the museum can expect bilingual lectures not just on vampires and witches but also on the roots of the concept of sin, the problematic religious philosophies that lead to the demonization of certain people and the importance of the vampire's current incarnation as a patrician rather than a peasant. Heavy stuff.

But first you'll need to find the museum, which isn't exactly easy. For Richard Turek, a sci-fi fan who's been visiting since 2007 (the museum opened in 2005), the place was a nifty discovery, though he only found it by way of a friend who'd already visited. Turek admits it may not be for everyone, particularly those with a traditional religious bent — unless they like an argument. Sirgent's discussions of vampires are based on the idea that, historically,

church officials used accusations of vampirism and witchcraft as a way to repress or oppress their believers. Also, you'll want to plan your visit in advance, as the museum is open by appointment only (admission is $9).

Still, the Museum of Vampires has a collection worth seeing. Check out the vampire-hunting kit from right around the time *Dracula* was first published, and the 1725 dictionary that was the first to include the word "vampire." You may find yourself staying for the philosophy. "If it makes you feel good, why not believe?" Sirgent asks rhetorically — be it vampires or ghosts.

Fiona Zublin is a Europe-based writer with some strong opinions on extinct megafauna.

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## The Most Loved Statues On College Campuses

Posted: 10/27/2014 8:35 am EDT Updated: 10/27/2014 3:59 pm EDT

Statues on college campuses tend to take on a life of their own, animated by students' traditions, legends and a penchant for pranking.

These cold, hard representations become a source of luck, a symbol of pride and achievement, and the world's most trustworthy confidante.

We took a look at the most loved campus statues, seeing what makes them so special to each school, and listed them here in no particular order. If you think we missed one, tweet it at us: @HuffPostCollege.

- Texas Tech University: Will Rogers Statue

kimberlyk

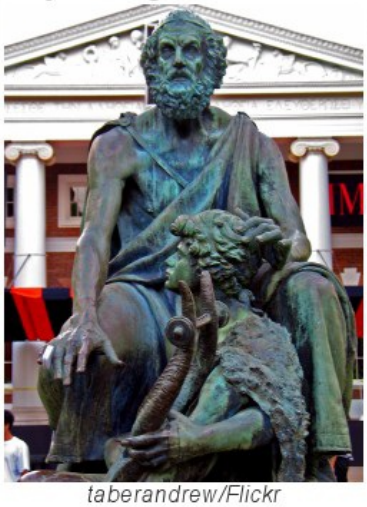


kimberlykv/Flickr

Legend has it this statue of Will Rogers on his favorite horse Soapsud was positioned for a very particular reason: Soapsud's bum faces school rival Texas A&M University. Before each home football game, Will Rogers is wrapped in red crepe paper, and during national tragedies the statue is wrapped in black crepe paper.

- University Of Virginia: Homer

taberandi



taberandrew/Flickr

At UVA, the epic Greek author has more to worry about than the Trojan War: It's tradition for students to streak from the steps of the Rotunda -- 740 feet away -- to the statue of Homer. They kiss or smack his butt (depending on their height) and then run back to the Rotunda.

- University Of California Los Angeles: Bruin Bear

David McNew via Getty Images

UCLA's Bruin Bear is one of the most protected statues around. Every year around the UCLA and University of Southern California rivalry week, the bear is guarded -- either by physical walls or a group of students called the "Bruin Bear Security



David McNew via Getty Images

Force" -- from vandalism as part of the schools' rivalry.

- Columbia University: Alma Mater

Presiding over Columbia University's campus is Alma Mater, a statue of the goddess Athena. Legend has it, the first person in each class to find an owl hidden on the statue will be the valedictorian -- or marry a Barnard College student.

- United States Naval Academy: Herndon Monument




ddrmaxgt37/Flickr

ASSOCIA PRESS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Herndon Monument was erected in 1860 in honor of Captain William Lewis Herndon. Now, it's covered in lard at the end of every year and plebes (first year students) work together to climb and put a sailor cap atop it. For tradition.

- Lebanon Valley College: "Hot Dog" Frank Aftosmes

Lebanon Valley College



Lebanon Valley College

The life-size statue of "Hot Dog" Frank Aftosmes has been on campus since 1997. The statue commemorates Aftosmes, who opened a hot dog shop in town in 1928 and was "a counselor, resource, friend, and #1 fan" to the college.

- University Of Maryland: Testudo

The

During finals, students at the University of

Washingt Post via Getty Images

Maryland-College Park give food and other sacrifices to school mascot Testudo, a Diamondback terrapin. In December 2013, the offerings actually caught on fire.




The Washington Post via Getty Images

- University Of Maryland: Jim Henson Memorial

douglas.e

Also at UMD: how could you not love this adorable statue of Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets and Maryland alum, chatting with Kermit the Frog?

- University Of Wisconsin: Abraham Lincoln



douglas.earl/Flickr

Universal via Getty Images

Abe Lincoln sit powerfully in front of Bascom Hall at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. On graduation day, newly minted alums climb all the way up to his lap to sit,




UniversalImagesGroup via Getty Images

whisper goals and secrets, and -- of course -- take the ultimate graduation picture.

- Hillsdale College: Margaret Thatcher

This lifelike statue of Margaret Thatcher, dedicated in 2008, is the only statue of the former British Prime Minister in North America, as of 2013.

- Yale University: Theodore Woolsey

On tours of Yale's campus, student guides tell hopeful students and their parents that it's tradition for Yalies to rub the toe of former university president Theodore Woolsey for good luck. ...But ask any actual student if they rub the toe, and they'll say absolutely not. A similar fake tradition exists with the John Harvard statue at Harvard University.

- Mary Baldwin College: Da And Da



cseeman/Flickr

Phil Cardamo via Getty Images

Da and Da are replicas of the statues Ham and Jam, who sit in front of Administration. Every year, senior art students paint Da and Da in fantastical bright colors and patterns.

- Boston College: Eagle

The eagle statue in front of BC's Gasson Hall is one of the most well-known landmarks on campus. Originally used as decoration in a garden, it was donated to the college as they knew it would be taken care of -- the eagle is, after all, BC's mascot.



Phil Cardamone via Getty Images

Mary Baldwin College

- University Of Notre Dame: First Down Moses

This statue outside the school's library is



Mary Baldwin College

BillDamo



BillDamon/Flickr

Paul J Everett/Fl

supposed to represent Moses chastising the Israelites for worshipping idols. But with a finger pointed up like that, he can only be saying one thing: Notre Dame is number one.

- Rutgers University: William The Silent

William the Silent has occasionally been brought into a Princeton-Rutgers



Paul J Everett/Flickr

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rivalry, with Princeton students vandalizing the statue. Additionally, according to campus lore, should a female virgin walk by, the statue whistles. Thus far, there has been no recorded whistling.

- Bryn Mawr College: Athena

Perosha/



Perosha/Flickr

Students at Bryn Mawr College (home to dozens of wild traditions) leave offerings, often homemade, and handwritten notes to the statue of Athena for help both in and out of school.

- Texas Christian University: Horned Frog

jimbower

The horned frog -- or really, lizard -- sits in the center of TCU's campus, representing the school's mascot. Students rub his nose for good luck before exams.



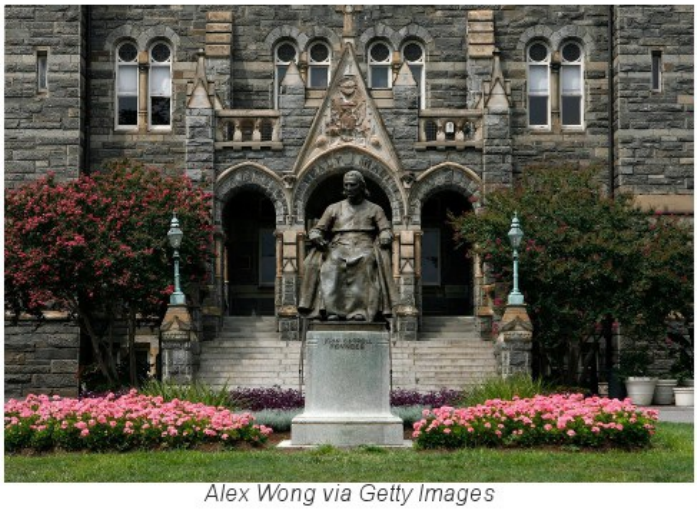
jimbowen0306/Flickr

- Georgetown University: John Carroll

A statue of the founder of Georgetown was actually not ready in time for its own unveiling. A painted plaster cast was in its place as dignitaries came to honor the statue, and the real statue was swapped in in the middle of the night.

- Amherst College: Sabrina

Alex Wong via Getty Images



Alex Wong via Getty Images

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Sabrina was brought to Amherst over 150 years ago and has since been subject



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to a series of pranks, involving dressing her up, stealing her, and flying her over athletic events. After the class of 2008 stole her in their senior year, they returned her at their five-year reunion in 2013. Less than two hours after she was returned, she was stolen by the class of 2003. Less than an hour after that, the class of 2014 snatched her away, and her whereabouts are currently unknown.

- Penn State University: Nittany Lion Shrine

pennstate



pennstatenews/Flickr

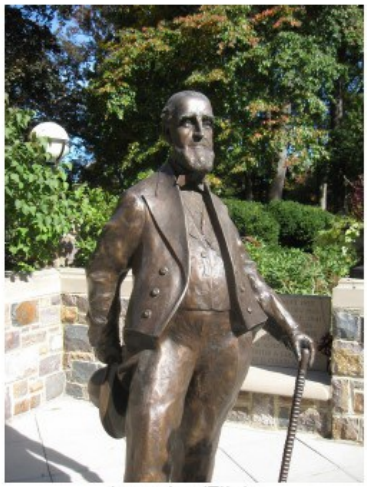
In 1966, the year Joe Paterno became head coach of the Penn State football team, his wife Sue painted the lion orange to incite unity and excitement for the homecoming game against Syracuse. Since then, students and fans participate in an annual Guard the Lion Shrine.

- Lehigh University: Asa Packer

This statue of the school's founder was brought to Lehigh in 2005. It is a true-to-life representation of Packer, down to the cane he walked with, which was made out of a deer vertebrae.

- Rice University: Willy

This statue of William Marsh Rice is a large part of student life (and decoration)/ But his real claim to fame was back in 1988 when a group of students managed to rotate the 2,000 pound statue 180 degrees. It took the students one hour and $400 to rotate him. It took professionals three hours and at least $1,500 to rotate him back.



joseph a/Flickr

neilfein/F



neilfein/Flickr

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Posted October 17th, 2015 by Laurie Kay Olson

One of the favorite monsters of Halloween is the legendary vampire. Since vampires first appeared hundreds of years ago it has taken on many forms in popular culture -- from humans to animals and from live-action to animation. One of the strangest vampires out there is the statue of a vampire rabbit that graces the exterior of historic cathedral buildings in Newcastle, England.



*The Vampire Rabbit of Newcastle (Image via Facebook)*

Contrary to popular misconception, a statue like this is not called a gargoyle, but a grotesque. Gargoyles were building accents that existed to drain rainwater away from the exterior walls of buildings to avoid damage to the buildings (think gargle). A grotesque is any of these carved beings, including gargoyles.

But I digress. This particular grotesque is truly grotesque. It was erected with the rest of the building in 1901 and is on a building facing the back of St. Nicholas Cathedral. No one really knows where the idea for this strange creature came from or what its meaning could possibly be. At the time it was put in place there was a popular local legend that spoke of grave robbers in the area being spooked out of their profession one dark night by a mysterious fanged creature.



*The Vampire Rabbit of Newcastle (Image via Facebook)*

Another theory is that it is not a rabbit but a hare and is a tribute to Sir George Hare Phipson who was a good friend of the architect. That doesn't explain the terrifying face, fangs, and claws of the creature though. There are also those who will point out that the ears appear to be on in reverse order. This could just be the work of a dyslexic stone mason, but since when do rabbits or hares have fangs. Perhaps I am just splitting hares here. HA!

The rabbit was originally the same ruddy color as the rest of the building but has been painted black in more recent years -- including drops of red paint dripping bloodily from its fangs and claws. It has become an unusual architectural oddity that has put Newcastle on the metaphoric map.

Personally I think it is there facing the back of the cathedral to catch anyone sneaking out of Sunday services and scare them back into the church. A couple of hours on a hard wooden bench might not seem so bad after seeing that.

Other rabbits have been known to have an effect on British history. Check out the video below!

Jimmy Fallon of the Tonight Show praised grotesques on Friday night: "Thank you gargoyles for saying 'This is a lovely building. You know what would make it better? THE DEVIL!'"

Sources: Atlas Obscura, Facebook, Wikipedia

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# The myth of the Richmond Vampire, and the reality of water pollution

augustafreepress.com

Published Thursday, Oct. 29, 2015, 12:10 am

Richmond is no stranger to things that go bump in the night. Our own Hollywood Cemetery is home to the notorious Richmond Vampire.  Said to be the undead William Wortham Pool, the vampire was first seen clawing his way out of a tunnel in 1925 after a railroad collapse, and has been spotted roaming the shores of the James since then. Those who have seen the creature say he has jagged teeth, a blood stained mouth, and decomposing flesh. The Richmond Vampire has been seen creeping back to Pool's mausoleum overlooking the James, the perfect place to sleep all day, and hunt all night.

Whether or not the Richmond Vampire truly exists is up for debate, but the scary pollution of our water is no myth. Right now Richmond's waterways are polluted with bacteria such as e-coli, industrial wastewater from factories bordering the river, and coal ash from dirty power plants. These contaminants can be legally dumped into streams that provide drinking water for over 2 million Virginians. This is why The Clean Water Act is vital to the health of our waterways.

Until recently, Virginia's waterways, including the multiple streams and wetlands that flow into the James, weren't protected under the Clean Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reenactment of the Clean Water Act meant closing loopholes from Supreme Court decisions from 2001 and 2006 that gave polluters the power to continue contamination our water. With closing the loophole, over 28,737 miles of Virginia's streams will be protected, thus shielding the drinking water for 2.3 million Virginians from harmful pollutants.

Unfortunately, in early October, polluters succeeded in having a hold placed on the rule, temporarily removing it from effect. In the face of all the opposition from the polluters, it's critical that all Virginians who value clean water make their voices heard. This fall, we'll need Senator Warner to side with clean water over the polluters, so that all of Virginia's lakes and streams remain protected by the Clean Water Act.

*– By Frances Klein/Environment Virginia*

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*By Ellen Castelow, Contributing Writer | Comments*



Perhaps the most notorious witch trial of the 17th century, the legend of the Pendle witches is one of the many dark tales of imprisonment and execution at Lancaster Castle. Twelve people were accused of witchcraft; one died while held in custody, eleven went to trial. One was tried and found guilty at York and the other ten were tried at Lancaster. Only one was found not guilty. It was an unusual trial in that it was documented in an official publication, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*, by the clerk of the court, Thomas Potts. As it was well documented, the story has remained as a well-known legend. Also, just over three centuries saw witch trials held in England but fewer than 500 people were executed for this crime. This one series of trials in the summer of 1612 therefore accounts for 2% of all witches executed.



*Photograph courtesy of the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board*

*Witches outside the Witches Galore shop in Newchurch in Pendle*

It is important to understand the background to the events of these trials. Six of the eleven "witches" on trial came from two rival families, the Demdike family and the Chattox family, both headed by old, poverty stricken widows, Elizabeth Southerns (aka "Old Demdike") and Anne Whittle ("Mother Chattox"). Old Demdike had been known as a witch for fifty years; it was an accepted part of village life in the 16th century that there were village healers who practised magic and dealt in herbs and medicines. The extent of the spate of witchcraft reported in Pendle at this time perhaps reflected the large amounts of money people could make by posing as witches. Indeed, it was a time when witchcraft was not only feared but also fascinated those from common village folk to King James I. James I had been greatly interested in witchcraft even before he took the throne (in 1603), writing a book, *Daemonologie*, instructing his readers to condemn and prosecute both supporters and practitioners of witchcraft. The scepticism of the king became reflected in the feelings of unrest about witchcraft among the common people.

The king's views were also imposed on the law; each Justice of the Peace in Lancashire at the beginning of the year of 1612 were instructed to compile a list of all those who refused to attend Church or take communion (a criminal offence). Lancashire had been regarded as a wild and lawless society, possibly related to the general sympathy with the Catholic Church. During the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the people of Pendle Hill openly opposed the closure of the nearby Cistercian Abbey and reverted straight back to Catholicism when Queen Mary came to the throne in 1553. The region of Lancashire was thought of as "where the church was honoured without much understanding of its doctrines by the common



*Photograph courtesy of the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board*

people". It was with this background of unease that the two judges made their investigations and sentenced the Pendle witches.

The story began with an altercation between one of the accused, Alizon Device, and a pedlar, John Law. Alizon, either travelling or begging on the road to Trawden Forest, passed John Law and asked him for some pins (it is not known whether her intention was to pay for them or whether she was begging). He refused and Alizon cursed him. It was a short while after this that John Law suffered a stroke, for which he blamed Alizon and her powers. When this incident was brought before Justice Nowell, Alizon confessed that she had told the Devil to lame John Law. It was upon further questioning that Alizon accused her grandmother, Old Demdike, and also members of the Chattox family, of witchcraft. The accusations on the Chattox family seem to have been an act of revenge. The families had been feuding for years, perhaps since one of the Chattox family broke into Malkin Tower (the home of the Demdikes) and stole goods to the value of £1 (approximately the equivalent of £100 now). Furthermore, John Device (father of Alizon) blamed the illness that led to his death on Old Chattox, who had threatened to harm his family if they did not pay annually for their protection.



*Photograph courtesy of the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board*

*16th century St Mary's Church at Newchurch in Pendle where the tombstone known as the Witches' Grave and the "Eye of God" are to be found. Chattox was alleged to have desecrated graves in this churchyard to collect skulls and teeth.*

The deaths of four other villagers that had occurred years before the trial were raised and the blame laid on witchcraft performed by Chattox. James Demdike confessed that Alizon had also cursed a local child some time before and Elizabeth, although more reserved in making accusations, confessed her mother had a mark on her body, supposedly where the Devil had sucked her blood, which left her mad. On further questioning both Old Demdike and Chattox confessed to selling their souls. Also Anne (Chattox's daughter) was allegedly seen to create clay figures. After hearing this evidence, the judge detained Alizon, Anne, Old Demdike and Old Chattox and waited for trial.

The story would have ended there had it not been for a meeting held at Malkin Tower by James Device (Alizon's brother), for which he stole a neighbour's sheep. Those sympathetic to the family attended but word reached the judge who felt compelled to investigate. As a result, a further eight people were summoned for questioning and then trial.



*Photograph courtesy of the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board*

*Lancaster Prison*

The trials were held at Lancaster between 17th and 19th August 1612. Old Demdike never reached trial; the dark, dank dungeon in which they were imprisoned was too much for her to survive. Nine year old Jennet Device was a key supplier of evidence for the Pendle witches' trial which was allowed under the system from King James; all normal rules of evidence could be suspended for witch trials, someone so young would not have been able to supply key evidence normally. Jennet gave evidence against those who attended the meeting at Malkin Tower but also against her mother, sister and brother! When she gave evidence against Elizabeth (her mother), Elizabeth had to be removed from the court screaming and cursing her daughter. Some of the Pendle witches seemed to be genuinely convinced of their guilt whereas others fought to clear their names. Alizon Device was one of those who believed in her own powers and was also the only one on trial who was faced with one of their victims, John Law. When John entered the court, it is documented that Alizon fell to her knees, confessed and burst into tears.

In conclusion, it seemed to be a range of exceptional circumstances that led to the extent of these witch trials. Indeed, Lancashire was exceptional in the number of witch trials that were held, in comparison to other regions who experienced the same degree of social depravity. The money that could be made from claiming powers in witchcraft in the 17th century probably caused the declarations made by the two families; they may have been in competition for the best reputation in the area. This backfired and the wild accusations escalated, fuelled by a general feeling of unrest and fear of witchcraft across the country, making this the biggest and most notorious witch trial.

*Photographs courtesy of the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board*

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# The Quixotic Quest to Find the Fairytale Capital of the World

atlasobscura.com

by **George Pendle** / 09 Nov 2015



*Joseph Noel Paton's 1849 painting of Oberon and Titania, fairies from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream . (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Joseph Noel Paton's 1849 painting of Oberon and Titania, fairies from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream . (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Joseph Noel Paton's 1849 painting of Oberon and Titania, fairies from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream . (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Hans Christian Andersen's childhood home in Odense. (Photo: Kåre Thor Olsen/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 ) Hans Christian Andersen's childhood home in Odense. (Photo: Kåre Thor Olsen/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 ) An illustration from Fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen, 1914. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) An illustration from Fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen, 1914. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Kassel, Germany, home of the Brothers Grimm. (Photo: Nikanos/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 2.5 ) Kassel, Germany, home of the Brothers Grimm. (Photo: Nikanos/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 2.5 ) The Brothers Grimm and historic buildings of Kassel on the last 1000 DM banknote. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) The Brothers Grimm and historic buildings of Kassel on the last 1000 DM banknote. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Buxtehude, Germany, a claimant for 'Fairy Tale Capital of the World'. (Photo: Arne Hückelheim/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 ) Buxtehude, Germany, a claimant for 'Fairy Tale Capital of the World'. (Photo: Arne Hückelheim/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 )*

Fairies are renowned for causing mischief, so it is little surprise to discover that the fairytale capital of the world is in dispute. In one corner stands the city of Odense in Denmark (pop. 173,814), the birthplace of fabulous fabulist, Hans Christian Andersen. In the other corner looms the city of Kassel in Germany (pop. 194,087), hometown of the magicians of make-believe, the Grimm Brothers. Who is the rightful fairytale capital of the world?

Andersen's links to Odense are intense. The writer of countless classic fairytales, including "The Emperor's New Clothes", "The Little Mermaid" and "The Ugly Duckling", was born in a slum in the city, the son of an impoverished shoemaker. He was sent to a school for the poor that he hated and where he was roundly abused by both fellow pupils and teachers alike. The themes of being an outsider and an outcast, themes that suffuse Andersen's sadder tales, can be traced back to his experiences in Odense. As such the city was instrumental in the creation of his fairytales. Today it is filled with statues of Andersen and his creations.

The Grimms' relationship to Kassel was quite the opposite. They grew up in a wealthy family and spent their formative years working as linguists in the pay of the King of Westphalia. They began collecting folk tales that they found in the royal library, or which they heard being told amongst their sister's friends, or Kassel acquaintances such as Dorothea Viehmann, a tavern-owner's daughter. The brothers compiled and published their first fairytale collection in 1812, unleashing on the world the stories of "Cinderella", "Rapunzel" and the" Frog Princess", although these stories have been greatly sanitized by translators and the Grimms themselves. (To give you an idea of the differences, in the original stories Cinderella's sisters



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have their eyes pecked out by pigeons, Sleeping Beauty does not have an evil stepmother, and Rapunzel is pregnant). Kassel today lies at the heart of the German Fairy Tale Route, a 370-mile-long tour dedicated to the life and works of the Brothers Grimm.

Interestingly Andersen actually met the Grimms in 1844, although not in Odense or Kassel but in Berlin. It was not a success. As Andersen described it in his autobiography:

*"I entered the room, and Jacob Grimm, with his knowing and strongly marked countenance, stood before me.*

*"I come to you," said I, "without letters of introduction because I hope that my name is not wholly unknown to you."*

*"Who are you?" asked he.*

*I told him; and Jacob Grimm said, in a half-embarrassed voice, "I do not remember to have heard this name: what have you written?"*

*It was now my turn to be embarrassed in a high degree;*

*but I now mentioned my little stories.*

*"I do not know them," said he; "but mention to me some other of your writings, because I certainly must have heard them spoken of."*

*I named the titles of several; but he shook his head. I felt myself quite unlucky."*

Awkward introductions aside, Andersen and the brothers were eventually reconciled and became great friends. Alas the same cannot occur between Odense and Kassel. While there can be many great fairytale writers, there cannot be two fairytale capitals of the world.

In order to discover the true fairytale capital of the world, it seems only sensible to try and discover where fairies themselves come from, and follow the pixie dust to what they call home. Fortunately while descriptions of nymphs, jinni and angels stretch back millennia, the



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term "fairy" dates only as far back as the Middle Ages. It is first mentioned in the Old French epic poems known as the chanson de geste ("song of deeds"). In the epic known as *Huon of Bordeaux*, a 13th Century knightly romp, Huon is set a series of seemingly impossible tasks which he achieves with the assistance of the fairy king, Oberon. In this poem fairyland is described as existing just beyond Palestine. Other chansons suggest it is more in the vicinity of Persia.



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In A.C. Hamilton's monumental encyclopedia on the granddaddy of fairy writing, Edmund Spenser, Hamilton explains that fairyland is constantly changing position because "Fairyland exists just beyond




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the boundaries of the known." As knowledge of the world was constantly changing in the Middle Ages, fairyland itself kept moving. One moment it was near the Caspian Sea, the next by the Pacific. In fact fairyland tended to be located near whatever new land had recently been discovered. As Columbus discovered America and Magellan circumnavigated the globe, fairyland receded farther and farther away. Up to a certain point it had been possible to ride or sail to fairyland, but soon fairyland drifted out of reach, towards the stars, or as the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, to some place deep within: "Faery is a place of the mind, a place of knowledge and perception, a place where spirit and love are known and experienced."

In other words, fairyland was nowhere at all.

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As such neither Odense nor Kassel, both of which are definitely somewhere, seem entirely suitable to be titled the Fairytale Capital of the World. Fortunately one other place is. Or rather, it isn't.

Buxtehude in northern Germany (pop. 39,777) labels itself the Fairytale Capital of the World, but is rather overshadowed by Kassel and Odense. Its claim to the title rests largely on the fact that it is mentioned by name in a number of German fairytales, like in the Brothers Grimm's "The Hare and the Hedgehog".

In itself, this would offer little weight to its claim. However because of Buxtehude's use as a



*Joseph Noel Paton's 1849 painting of Oberon and Titania, fairies from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream . (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Joseph Noel Paton's 1849 painting of Oberon and Titania, fairies from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream . (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Joseph Noel Paton's 1849 painting of Oberon and Titania, fairies from Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream . (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Hans Christian Andersen's childhood home in Odense. (Photo: Kåre Thor Olsen/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 ) Hans Christian Andersen's childhood home in Odense. (Photo: Kåre Thor Olsen/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 ) An illustration from Fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen, 1914. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) An illustration from Fairy tales from Hans Christian Andersen, 1914. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Kassel, Germany, home of the Brothers Grimm. (Photo: Nikanos/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 2.5 ) Kassel, Germany, home of the Brothers Grimm. (Photo: Nikanos/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 2.5 ) The Brothers Grimm and historic buildings of Kassel on the last 1000 DM banknote. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) The Brothers Grimm and historic buildings of Kassel on the last 1000 DM banknote. (Photo: Public Domain/WikiCommons ) Buxtehude, Germany, a claimant for 'Fairy Tale Capital of the World'. (Photo: Arne Hückelheim/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 ) Buxtehude, Germany, a claimant for 'Fairy Tale Capital of the World'. (Photo: Arne Hückelheim/WikiCommons CC BY-SA 3.0 )*

backdrop for the fantastical, the town's name has itself come to mean a faraway, imagined place. A German saying—"nach Buxtehude jagen", "hunting for Buxtehude"—means something like "going on a wild goose chase." "Buxtehude" has come to mean a place that you can't find, a place that doesn't exist, a place that is nowhere at all. Which, happily enough, is exactly where you can find fairyland.

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By strangeremainsNovember 1, 2015



*The Vampire by Sir Philip Burne-Jones, ca. 1897. Image credit: Wikipedia*

The vampire myth originates in ancient beliefs in demons or evil spirits who feed on the blood and flesh of the living. Cultures all over the world have a version of a blood-sucking creature that returns from the grave to torment and feed on people. The creatures in these ancient myths eventually gave way to bloated folkloric vampires that spread disease and the charismatic fictional vampires that consume the living and give eternal life. In New England in the 19th century so many people believed that their dead family members were climbing out of their graves to kill relatives that the issue was addressed by incredulous academics and reporters in journals and newspaper articles.

According to Paul Barber, author of Vampires, Burial & Death, there are two types of vampires: folkloric and fictional. Fictional vampires are supernatural creatures seen in movies and television with = pale skin and long sharp teeth. The fictional vampire was popularized by Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897) but was influenced by the folkloric revenants of Central and Eastern European cultures.

For the Slavic people an *upir*, or *ubir*, was an unclean spirit that possessed a decomposing corpse. While the Romanians believed that a *strigoi* was made when a troubled or mischievous person dies. Both the *upir* and *strigoi* returned to drink the blood of relatives and fellow villagers, which eventually caused illness or death. These revenant traditions likely evolved out of a misunderstanding of disease transmission and post-mortem decomposition.

If a village was struck by a disease epidemic, many Europeans believed that the first person to die had become a vampire and was attacking their village causing additional deaths. To confirm a case of vampirism, villagers exhumed the suspected revenant's grave. If the corpse had a bloated chest, sloughing skin, discoloration of the face, bloody mouth, long fingernails, or was in a state of inexplicable preservation then the diagnosis of vampirism was confirmed.

Forensic scientists now know that during decomposition bodies bloat because of a buildup of gas produced by bacteria, skin slips off, skin discolors because of marbling and livor mortis, dark purge fluid escapes orifices, skin around fingernails retracts making them seem to grow longer, and if a body is buried in the cold ground during winter it will likely take longer to decompose. Almost any corpse would be considered a vampire if it was exhumed at the right time.

At the end of the 19th century there was a well-documented vampire panic in New England. The folkloric vampire of New England was very similar to its European counterpart, likely because of the immigrants that settled in the area. People in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont believed that their dead relatives were rising from the grave to

spread consumption, or tuberculosis, to the living. Sledzik and Bellantoni estimate that there are 12 documented accounts of vampiric attacks in New England, in 11 of those 12 attacks consumption was noted as a cause of death.

Tuberculosis is caused by a bacterium from the genus Mycobaterium, two of which infect humans: *M. tuberculosis* and *M. bovis.* *M. tuberculosis*, also known as consumption, infects the lungs, and is spread via contaminated bodily fluids (i.e. saliva or mucus) that are dispersed during a cough or a sneeze. Symptoms include chronic cough, coughing up blood and mucus, fever, weakness night sweats, and weight loss. Once in the lungs the infection can spread through the blood stream to other parts of the body, including bones.

Tuberculosis is a disease historically associated with poverty, overcrowding, and malnutrition. It's also a disease that would have spread among multi-generational families living under one roof. Tuberculosis was a major cause of death of humans from the 17th to 19th centuries.

The fear that vampires were causing the death of consumptive relatives was so widespread that the president of the Washington Anthropological Society, George R. Stetson, wrote an article titled "The Animistic Vampire in New England" that was published in the 1896 edition of the American Anthropologist.

> "In New England the vampire superstition is unknown by its proper name. It is there believed that consumption is not a physical but a spiritual disease, obsession, or visitation; that as long as the body of a dead consumptive relative has blood in its heart it is proof that an occult influence steals from it for death and is at work draining the blood of the living into the heart of the dead and causing his rapid decline."

These New Englanders believed that the only way to stop these vampiric attacks and the spread of consumption was to dig up the suspected vampire and render it incapable of rising out of its coffin by burning its organs or body or beheading it. The vampire slayings of New England are documented in newspapers and even in the archaeological record.



*"The Vampire", lithograph by R. de Moraine (1864). Image*

## Griswold, CT

In November if 1990 children playing near a gravel mine in Griswold, CT discovered an abandoned cemetery used by the Walton family in the 18th and 19th centuries. The skeletal remains of 29 people were examined by Paul Sledzik, a forensic anthropologist who worked at the National Museum Health and Medicine in D.C., and Nicholas Bellantoni, an archaeologist with the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History. In their article, published in the American Journal of Physical Anthropology, Sledzik and Bellantoni argue that the bones in burial #4 displayed signs of a vampiric slaying.

The body in burial #4 was interred in a coffin with "JB-55" spelled in brass tacks on the lid. The bones belonged to a male between 50

*credit: Wikipedia.* and 55 years old who died in the early to mid-1800's. J.B.'s skull and femora had been rearranged in a "skull and crossbones" on top of his ribs. Sledzik and Bellantoni also found lesions in the ribs, consistent with a chronic pulmonary infection like tuberculosis.

The "Jolly Roger" assembly of JB's bones suggests that there was very little soft tissue left on the corpse when the body was unearthed the first time, which meant that there were no organs to burn to stop vampiric activity. Sledzik and Bellantoni "hypothesize" that the body was beheaded as an alternative to burning the heart.



*Vampyr by Edvard Munch (1895) Image credit: Wikipedia.*

**Jewett City, CT**

On May 30, 1854 The Brooklyn Daily Eagle reported on a "strange superstition" found in the *Norwich Courier*. Horace Ray of Griswold, CT had three sons. Horace died of consumption around 1846, followed by two of his sons soon after. When the third boy was diagnosed with tuberculosis, friends and family of his two dead brothers broke into their cemetery in Jewett City, exhumed their bodies, and burned their remains.

> "The Norwich, Conn., Courier relates a strange and almost incredible tale of superstition recently enacted in Jewett City, in that vicinity. About six years ago, Horace Ray, of Griswold, died of consumption. Since that time two of his children, grown up people, have died of the same disease, that last one dying some years since. Not long ago the same fatal disease seized upon another son, whereupon it was determined to exhume the bodies of the two brothers already dead, and burn them because the dead were supposed to feed upon the living; and so long as the dead body remained in a state of decomposition, either wholly or in part, surviving members of the family must continue to furnish the sustenance on which that dead body fed. Acting under the influence of this strange and blind superstition, the family and friends of the deceased proceeded to the burial ground at Jewett City on the 8th inst., dug up the dead bodies of the deceased brothers, and burned them on the spot. It seems impossible to believe that such dark ignorance and folly could exist in the middle of the 19th century, and in a state calling itself enlightened and Christian."

**Exeter, RI**

Mercy Lena Brown lived in a farming community near Exeter, RI. Her mother and sister died of consumption in 1882 and 1883, respectively. Then Mercy died from the same disease when she was 19 years old on January 17, 1892.

Mercy's brother Edwin had contracted tuberculosis before she passed, but worsened shortly after her death. Friends of Mercy's family spoke to her father, George, and suggested that



*Grave stone of Mercy Brown. Image credit: Wikipedia.*

one of the deceased Brown women had turned into a vampire and was feeding on Edwin. The locals asked George to exhume the bodies of his wife and two daughters to see if their hearts contained fresh blood, one of the telltale signs of vampirism.

On March 17, 1892 the corpses of the three women were unearthed in front of a reporter from the *Providence Journal*. The bodies of Mercy's mother and sister were reduced to bones so they were eliminated as suspects. When Mercy's body was disinterred, about three months after her death, the villagers discovered that the body was well preserved. When her heart was removed and cut open it was found that it still had "clotted and decomposed blood."

The villagers were convinced that Mercy's preserved body and bloody heart (although not fresh) was evidence she was a vampire. So they burned her heart and liver and fed Edwin the ashes in the hopes that the cremated organs would treat his consumption. All of this was for nothing because Edwin died a few weeks later.

After Mercy's much publicized exhumation, George Stetson went to Rhode Island to inquire about the vampire panic in the area. He used the information from this trip to write his

Dolly Stolze is the writer and editor of Strange Remains, a blog site about human remains, bizarre history, and even weirder excavations.

Her articles have been featured on Atlas Obscura, Defrosting Cold Cases, and Forensic Magazine.

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By Frances Cronin

- 17 August 2011



*Anne Redferne and her mother Chattox were two of those accused of being Pendle witches*

In recent years children as young as three have given evidence in court cases, but in the past children under 14 were seen as unreliable witnesses. A notorious 17th Century witch trial changed that.

Nine-year-old Jennet Device was an illegitimate beggar and would have been lost to history but for her role in one of the most disturbing trials on record.

Jennet's evidence in the 1612 Pendle witch trial in Lancashire led to the execution of 10 people, including all of her own family.

In England at that time paranoia was endemic. James I was on the throne, living in fear of a Catholic rebellion in the aftermath of Guy Fawkes' gun powder plot. The king had a reputation as an avid witch-hunter and wrote a book called Demonology.

"It was a mandate for the British to fight witches," explains Prof Ronald Hutton from the University of Bristol.

At the time Lancashire had a reputation for being full of trouble-makers and subversives. Jennet lived with her mother Elizabeth, her grandmother Demdike, older sister Alizon and brother James in the shadow of the Pendle hill. Villagers dubbed Demdike a "cunning woman".

In March 1612, Alizon cursed a pedlar who would not give her any pins. The pedlar collapsed and his son reported it to an ambitious local magistrate, Roger Nowell.

He interviewed Alizon, who confessed to bewitching the pedlar but also accused their neighbours, who the family were having a feud with, of bewitching and killing four people.

The neighbours pointed the finger straight back at Demdike, accusing her of witchcraft.

"Nowell was extremely zealous," says Prof Malcolm Gaskill from the University of East Anglia.

"He sees his route to success in his career is to identify non-conformists, that could be Catholics or witches, and bring them to justice."

He arrested Alizon, granny Demdike, as well as their neighbours Anne Whittle (also known as

Chattox) and her daughter Anne Redferne.

Jennet's mother then hosted a party on Good Friday, when all "good citizens" should have been in church. A local constable heard rumours of a meeting of witches, so arrested everyone present. The family also implicated others and all were accused of trying to plot to kill a man using witchcraft.

Alice Nutter, from a respectable land-owning family, her sister-in-law, nephew and friend were among those arrested.

**Jennet's evidence**


WONDERFVLL
DISCOVERIE OF
WITCHES IN THE COVN-
TIE OF LAN-
CASTER.
With the Arraignement and Triall of
*The wonderful discovery of witches book*

"My mother is a witch and that I know to be true. I have seen her spirit in the likeness of a brown dog, which she called Ball. The dog did ask what she would have him do and she answered that she would have him help her to kill.

"At 12 noon about 20 people came to our house - my mother told me they were all witches."

She named six people whose names she knew and her mother and brother.

James denounced his mother Elizabeth too but Jennet then turned on her own brother and said he had been a witch for three years. She said she had seen his spirit kill three people.

"At that time they were a strong Catholic family. I think [Nowell] thought he would curry favour with the King and the powers that be if he was catching Catholics as well," says Colin Nutter, a descendant of Alice who still lives near the Pendle hill.

"She was used as a pawn for his own ends really."

In his book Demonology, James I wrote: "Children, women and liars can be witnesses over high treason against God." This influenced the justice system and led to Nowell using Jennet as his key witness.

The clerk of the court, Thomas Potts, wrote a book of all the notes he made of the trial, which became a bestseller and spread the story far and wide.

In The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster, Potts recounted how Jennet's mother Elizabeth screamed out when her daughter entered the court. Jennet demanded her mother be removed and then climbed on a table and calmly denounced her as a witch.

Her convincing evidence was believed by the jury and after a two-day trial all her family and most of her neighbours were found guilty of causing death or harm by witchcraft.

The day after they were hanged at Gallows Hill.




*The Salem witch trials allowed evidence from children after Jennet Device set the precedent*

Image caption

But Jennet's influence went far beyond Lancashire. Thomas Potts' writings and Jennet's evidence were included in a reference handbook for magistrates, The Country Justice.

The book was used by all magistrates, including those in the colonies in America, and led them to seek the testimony of children in trials of witchcraft.

So at the notorious Salem witch trials in 1692, most of the evidence was given by children. Nineteen people were hanged.

There had been earlier cases of children being witnesses in witch trials, but the law stated those under 14 were not credible witnesses because they could not be sworn under oath. Jennet's testimony changed all that.

Today children of any age can be called to give evidence as their competence depends upon their understanding not their age.

Ultimately though, Jennet fell victim to the very precedent she set herself in 1633.




*Pendle now trades on its infamous past with witch tours and the image of witches appear on the local bus service and beer*

Image caption

Twenty years after the trial she too was accused of witchcraft along with 16 others by 10-year-old Edmund Robinson.

They were found guilty by a jury but the judges were not happy and it was referred to the Privy Council. England had become more sceptical over time and physical evidence was demanded.

Edmund eventually admitted lying because of the stories he had heard about the Pendle witch trial.

The last known record of Jennet Device was in 1636.

Despite having been acquitted she was not allowed to leave Lancaster Castle until she had paid for her board for the time she had spent there on trial. For someone like Jennet, that could have been impossible.

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# The woman who gave birth for Hitler

*Thursday 29th October 2015*

historyextra.com

In 1936, Nazi supporter and school graduate Hildegard Trutz was recruited as one of Germany's racially 'pure' women, chosen to sleep with SS officers in the hope of producing an Aryan child



*German women carrying children believed to be part of the Lebensborn programme, which aimed to raise the birth rate of blonde-haired, blue-eyed 'Aryan' children through interbreeding. (Photo by Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)*

**It is estimated that some 20,000 such babies were bred during the 12 years of the Third Reich, principally in Germany and Norway.**

**This bizarre tale, which you can read below in full, features in Giles Milton's new curious history book, *Fascinating Footnotes From History*.**

**Spanning 20 centuries and six continents, the book rounds up 100 of the quirkiest historical happenings.**

**Here, courtesy of publisher John Murray, you can read the extract 'The Woman Who Gave Birth for Hitler'…**

Hildegard Trutz had been a loyal supporter of the Nazis ever since Hitler came to power. She had joined the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM, the female equivalent of the Hitler Youth) in 1933 and loved attending its weekly meetings. 'I was mad about Adolf Hitler and our new better Germany,' she later admitted. 'I learned how tremendously valuable we young people were to Germany.'

Trutz quickly became a figurehead of her local organization, in part because of her Germanic blonde hair and blue eyes. 'I was pointed out as the perfect example of the Nordic woman,' she said, 'for besides my long legs and my long trunk, I had the broad hips and pelvis built for child-bearing.'

In 1936, when she was eighteen, Trutz finished her schooling and was at a loss as to what to do next. She chatted with a BDM leader who made a suggestion that was to change Trutz's life for ever. 'If you don't know what to do,' said the leader, 'why not give the Führer a child? What Germany needs more than anything is racially valuable stock.'

Trutz was unaware of the state-sponsored programme known as Lebensborn. Its aim was to raise the birth rate of blond-haired, blue-eyed 'Aryan' children through interbreeding. Racially 'pure' women were chosen to sleep with SS officers in the hope that they would fall pregnant.

The BDM leader explained to her exactly how Lebensborn worked. She would be given a

series of medical tests, along with a thorough investigation of her background. It was essential that she had no Jewish blood. Once given the all-clear, she would be able to select a breeding partner from a group of SS officers.

Trutz listened with growing enthusiasm. ‘It sounded wonderful,’ she later admitted, and she signed up immediately. Aware that her parents would disapprove, she told them she was undertaking a residential course in National Socialism.

She was escorted to an old castle in Bavaria, near the Tegernsee. There were forty other girls in residence and all were living under assumed names. ‘All you needed to be accepted there was a certificate of Aryan ancestry as far back at least as your great-grandparents.’

The castle itself was the height of luxury. There were common rooms for sports and games, a library, music room and even a cinema. According to Trutz: ‘The food was the best I have ever tasted; we didn’t have to work and there were masses of servants.’ She was by her own admission self-indulgent and lazy and she quickly learned to enjoy life in the castle.

‘The whole place was in the charge of a professor, a high-up SS doctor, who examined each of us very thoroughly as soon as we arrived,’ Trutz said. ‘We had to make a statutory declaration that there had never been any cases of hereditary diseases, dipsomania or imbecility in our family.’

The professor also warned the girls that they would have to sign a document renouncing all claims to any children they produced, as they were to be the property of the state. They would be brought up in special institutions that would instil an absolute loyalty to the Nazi ideal.

After their initiation, Trutz and the other girls were introduced to the SS men who were to be their breeding partners. Trutz liked what she saw. ‘They were all very tall and strong with blue eyes and blond hair.’ There was a getting-to-know-you session, with the group playing games together, watching films and enjoying social evenings in the castle.

‘We were given about a week to pick the man we liked and we were told to see to it that his hair and eyes corresponded exactly to ours,’ said Trutz. The girls were not told the names of any of the men: anonymity was a key principle of the Lebensborn programme.

‘When we had made our choice, we had to wait until the tenth day after the beginning of the last period.’ Each girl was given another medical examination and told to receive her chosen SS man in her room that very night. Trutz was unbelievably excited, not just about the sexual activity, but the fact that she was doing it all for her beloved Führer.

‘As both the father of my child and I believed completely in the importance of what we were doing, we had no shame or inhibitions of any kind.’ She was particularly impressed with the ‘smashing looks’ of her chosen partner, although she thought he was probably a little stupid.

The officer slept with Trutz for three evenings in that first week. On the other evenings, he had to sleep with other girls at the castle.

Trutz fell pregnant almost immediately and was moved into a maternity home for the next nine months. ‘My confinement came neither too soon nor too late,’ she said. ‘It was not an easy birth, for no good German woman would think of having any artificial aids, such as injections to deaden the pain, like they had in the degenerate Western democracies.’

She weaned her baby son for two weeks and then he was removed from her side and taken to a special SS home where he was to be brought up as a loyal servant of the Nazi state. Trutz never saw him again. Nor, for that matter, did she see the father.

In the years that followed she was tempted to breed more children, but she eventually fell in love with a young officer and they got married. When she told her new husband about her involvement in the Lebensborn programme, she was ‘rather surprised to find that he was not as pleased about it as he might have been’. But he could not openly criticize her, ‘seeing that I had been doing my duty to the Führer’.

Trutz never discovered what became of her child and his eventual fate remains a mystery. Like so many Lebensborn babies, he almost certainly found himself ostracized in post-war Germany, his birth and upbringing a stigma that could never be completely expunged.

It is estimated that some 20,000 babies were bred during the twelve years of the Third Reich, principally in Germany and Norway. Many were adopted after the war, by which time the records of their birth had been destroyed. To this day the majority have never been able to discover the terrible truth about their conception and birth.

**Giles Milton’s *Fascinating Footnotes From History* (John Murray, 2015) is out now.**

**To find out more about Giles, visit www.gilesmilton.com.**

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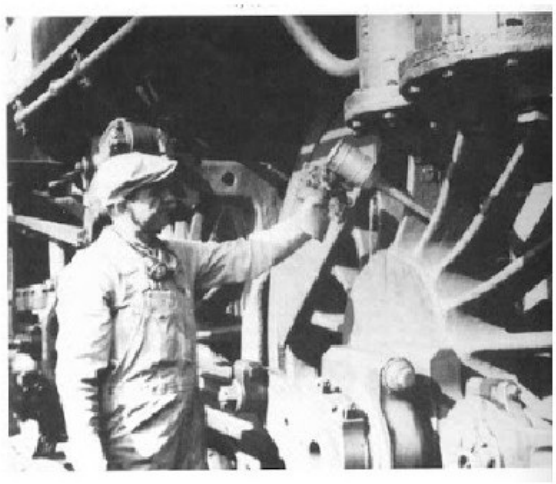
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**Wednesday, February 6, 2013**

## THE CRASH OF "THE BROKER"
### The Woodbridge, New Jersey Train Disaster

On this date, February 6, 1951, one of the worst train wrecks in America occurred at Woodbridge, New Jersey. It had been an ordinary Tuesday, nothing special. The day was cold and damp, with light rain falling off and on most of the day. People remarked that it could have been worse; it could have been snow. It was February 6, 1951. The workday was ending and people were heading home. Thousands of people were making their way to the closest commuter train station.

Many of them would never make it home alive.



**PRR Engineer Joseph Fitzsimmons before the Woodbridge wreck.**

On a Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) track in Jersey City, New Jersey, a nine-car commuter train known as "The Broker" waited to begin its express run to Bay Head. The Broker would soon be carrying homebound commuters, mostly from New York City offices, to their homes in Red Bank, Long Branch, Asbury Park, and other communities along the New Jersey's wealthy shoreline. The Broker was so named because most of the regular riders were bankers, lawyers, stockbrokers and other businessmen, as well as office workers.

Engineer Joseph Fitzsimmons was already on the train, going through the necessary preparations and building up steam prior to getting underway. Fitzsimmons was 52 years old and had been working on trains his entire adult life. He had spent 33 years on the rails without a single accident.

The Broker's nine passenger coaches carried an average of 900 people on a typical weekday

evening. This Tuesday however, was not going to be a typical evening. There was another railroad line that ran the same basic route, the Jersey Central. However, switchmen working for the Jersey Central Railroad had called a “sick call strike” and most of their commuter trains were not running. The Broker’s usual passengers load had swollen by several hundred. The train was seriously overcrowded and the aisles were packed. The Broker pulled out of the Exchange Place station in Jersey City at 5:10 in the evening.

Earlier in the day, the rail line the train would normally follow had been slightly altered. In Woodbridge, a small New Jersey city 30 miles south of New York, the train would be taking a short detour. Work had begun on the construction of the New Jersey Turnpike, and where the train passed through Woodbridge, paralleling Fulton Street, a new temporary wooden trestle had been built to accommodate workers building the turnpike below. The new trestle shifted the track roughly fifty feet from the original line to pass over Fulton Street, on an embankment 20 feet above the street. The trestle had been put into service that afternoon, about five hours before The Broker was scheduled to cross it. It appeared to be solid and safe, as six PRR trains had already passed over it without incident. Because of the shift in the line, a “go slow” order had been posted in the PRR alert board, requiring a reduction in speed for the approach and crossing of the trestle. Under normal conditions, trains would speed through that section between 50 and 60 miles per hour. The “go slow” order reduced the speed limit to 25 miles per hour until the trestle was cleared.

The trip had gone smoothly as Engineer Fitzsimmons pulled his train away from the Newark platform and began picking up speed as he drove through the darkening winter evening. Fitzsimmons later said that as the train neared the new trestle, he had tried to slow down but was having great difficulty. The rails were wet and slick, and the train was terribly overloaded, making it much heavier than usual. The additional weight and slick rails created a situation where the train took much longer to slow down sufficiently. The train was heading into the curve approaching the new trestle at over 50 miles per hour. At 5:43 in the evening, just 33 minutes after the train had left the station, Woodbridge experienced the worst train wreck to take place in the United States in decades. The speed and weight of the overloaded train as it rounded the curve onto the trestle had shifted the tracks, causing the train to derail. By the time the sun rose to chase away the darkness, 82 people would lie dead on a garage floor, and over 500 people would be injured, many of them seriously.

At the moment the train passed over the trestle, it lurched sharply and started to sway. The engineer applied the brakes, but it was too late. Momentum carried the engine and the first three coaches over the chasm before falling down the end of the embankment and onto the street below.

The engine flew from the tracks in an arc and fell more than 20 feet to the pavement below. The first five coaches after the engine whipped back and forth, ending in a horrible tangle of ripped steel. Eight of the coaches had been derailed. The first two lay on their sides in the mud of the wet embankment. The third and fourth cars had telescoped into each other and were the most badly twisted and smashed. The largest number of deaths and serious injuries occurred in these cars. Still others remained upright but were horribly twisted and smashed,

with one car was bent into a U-shape. Inside the coaches, passengers were tossed around like rag dolls as the cars jerked and rolled. Metal stressed and tore, mutilating and crushing the passengers inside. Newspaper accounts reported that some were "...mangled to bits under the grinding weight of the sharp, broken metal. Others survived or died in tomb-like crevasses of steel, as some of the coaches were bent by the terrible force of the crash."



**Aerial view of a section "The Broker"**

At first, the air was rent with the sounds of the train as it smashed and crashed and the scream of the metal as it was torn and twisted in a thousand places. Then came a terrible quiet -- everything was still. The quiet lasted only a moment, for very soon moans and screams shattered the silence. There were chilling cries of: "Help me, help me please..." Moans and sobs of men and women writhing in pain, if they could move at all, were heard from every part of the twisted hulk.

The coaches in the center, specifically the fifth, sixth and seventh cars, were left fully or partially suspended over the street below. In these cars, many of the passengers who were able to move on their own, crawled toward the windows looking for a means to escape. The train's route crossed over rivers at several points and many of these people believed they had crashed over a river. The view out the windows at the street below, with streetlights reflecting on the dark, wet asphalt, made many of the disoriented passengers believe they were in water. Many jumped headfirst from the wrecked coaches, expecting river water to soften their landing; instead they hit hard, unforgiving pavement. These people had survived the train crash, but died in an attempt to save themselves.



**The force of the speeding, overloaded train ripped the rails from the temporary trestle, but the trestle remained standing.**

The wreck occurred in a heavily populated area so help was very quick to arrive. The Woodbridge fire and police departments were the first official rescue agencies to appear. They found it extremely difficult to climb up the slick, muddy embankment to get to the wrecked coaches, and nearly impossible to pull the injured from the train and back down through the mud. Ladders were laid down on the embankment and the rescuers used the rungs as a sort of stairs. The Woodbridge Fire Department used their ladder truck for nearly the same purpose, except they were able to extend the ladder over the embankment and directly onto the coaches.

Ambulances, first aid squads, and medical personnel came from at least twenty neighboring communities and cities. The Perth Amboy General Hospital, the nearest urban hospital, was alerted that there would be a large influx of injured passengers. Perth Amboy went into full disaster mode and received nearly all the people whose injuries were serious enough to need immediate and intensive medical care. First aid squads assisted those injured who were able to walk with treatment at the site. The number of injured and dead passengers was so great that a local grocery supplier had its trucks pressed into service as additional ambulances, and later as hearses.

Within thirty minutes, an enormous crowd had arrived and surrounded the crash site. Some volunteered to help, but the majority had come out of morbid curiosity to watch the bloody drama unfold. The vast numbers of onlookers, pushing in on each other, rapidly became a calamity within itself. Ambulances experienced great difficulty getting in or out. Rescue workers had to struggle to get through the crowds. Vital rescue equipment was smashed under the mass of feet. Seeing how the behavior of the crowd was delaying the rescue operation, and possibly costing the lives of victims in dire need of immediate attention, Governor Alfred Driscoll called in the New Jersey National Guard for crowd control. The Guardsmen stood side by side, arms linked, forming a human chain, after which the rescue and recovery efforts moved forward at a rapid pace.

The whole area was lit with acetylene torches and countless flashlights could be seen bouncing about as the rescuers searched for anyone still clinging to life. When a survivor was

found, a call went out for assistance. The rescuers would work in a group to chop, cut, or pry away any obstructions that might be pinning the victim, then they would be loaded onto a stretcher and carried down the ladders to the street.

Some victims were able to leave the wreck by themselves, whether they had received medical treatment and been released or had been uninjured. Many people living near the crash site opened their homes to these stunned and shocked individuals. They were offered food, warm blankets, and most importantly for some - the use of telephones. They needed to call home to assure their families that they were alive and to find transportation home.

As it became apparent that the number of dead would be high, a place had to be found to store the bodies until identifications could be made. There was no place large enough that could accommodate the huge number of bodies being pulled from the wreckage. It was decided that the garage at the Woodbridge Fire Department would serve as a temporary morgue, but the idea of laying bodies on the dirty floor of a garage was repugnant. The problem was solved when a local butcher donated large rolls of waxed brown paper. As each body was brought into the garage, a sheet of the brown paper was unrolled and the blood-spattered workers gently placed the body on the paper. Then another sheet of paper was cut and laid over the body. Witnesses described how “the feet of the dead sprawled limp, uncovered by the paper shrouds.”

Some of the bodies brought into the morgue were so severely mutilated that it took hours to identify them, and then only by an article of clothing or a personal belonging. As word of the morgue’s location spread, terrified family and friends of anyone who was supposed to be on the train that evening lined up outside, hoping against hope that their loved one would not be lying on the floor.

One of the last living victims to be freed, his body partially crushed, found trapped under one of the heavy steel wheels that had been ripped from one of the coaches. The rescue and recovery continued nonstop until the last body had been removed from the wreckage. It took over seven hours. The National Guardsmen stayed to watch over the site throughout the night to prevent looting and keep souvenir hunters from climbing on the wreck and getting hurt.

The day after the crash, the FBI opened an investigation looking for evidence of sabotage. Finding none, the case was closed.

The Pennsylvania Railroad (PPR) conducted its own investigation and laid the entire blame at the feet of Engineer Joseph Fitzsimmons. The PRR was accepting no culpability, even though they had failed to install any yellow warning lights to signal a change in speed ahead, or to signal an unexpected change in the track conditions, such as a shift of 50 feet and a new temporary trestle.

The Interstate Commerce Commission was ordered to make an investigation into the cause of the wreck. A public hearing was convened the day after the crash. A string of witnesses

including PRR employees, passengers, expert engineers and community members who witnessed the crash. Fault was found with the operational practices of the PRR. New rules and guidelines were put in place in order to reduce the possibility of a repeat accident of this kind.

The Middlesex County prosecutor's office found the fault lay with the PRR for the accident. It was discovered that the PRR had a company safety rule that yellow signals were to be installed at all go-slow areas, regardless of paper notices posted in the offices. It was further discovered that the PRR branch that operated along the north Jersey Shore had a practice of ignoring the rule. The assistant prosecutor voiced outrage that the PRR was using Fitzsimmons as a scapegoat. He brought 85 counts of manslaughter against the PRR. However, the charges were later dropped when it was determined that the cost of the court proceedings would bankrupt the county. In the end, they agreed to an out-of-court settlement.

A year after the accident, the bridge had been rebuilt and all debris, wreckage, and evidence of the crash had been removed and the trains were "back on track." In preparation for the anniversary of the crash, a group of survivors requested that the rush hour train would stop at the site of the crash just before 6:00 p.m. for a brief ceremony to commemorate the loss of life. Administrators at the PRR denied the request. Instead, the group stood at the rear of the train and threw out a spray of 85 flowers onto the track as they neared the crash site -- one flower for each life that was lost.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:34 AM

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## Glowing Pygmy Shark Lights Up to Fade Away

Camouflage key to "one of the most mysterious areas of shark biology."
By **Helen Scales**, for National Geographic News

PUBLISHED Wed May 02 15:10:00 EDT 2012



*A smalleye pygmy shark (top) and a glowing lantern shark (bottom).*

**In what may sound like soggy logic, the smalleye pygmy shark hides in the dark by lighting up, a new study says.**

**The research is helping to illuminate one of sharkdom's biggest evolutionary puzzles: how some species came to shine in the first place.**

"More than 10 percent of currently described shark species are luminous," lead study author Julien Claes said via email.

"However, bioluminescence remains one of the most mysterious areas of shark biology," added Claes, a biologist with Belgium's Catholic University of Louvain.

Growing to be just 6 inches (15 centimeters) long, the smalleye pygmy is among the world's smallest sharks. In its deep, open-ocean habitat, the species' shining blue belly acts as camouflage, the study says.

"If you're swimming in the deep-blue dark waters, seen from underneath, you create a shadow against the bluish light coming from the surface," said study co-author Jérôme Mallefet.

"If you produce the same bluish light on your belly, you disappear—you don't show your shadow anymore," added Mallefet, also a biologist at the Catholic University of Louvain.

### Shark Semaphore

Earlier studies had revealed that three hormones—melatonin, prolactin, and alpha-MSH—control light emission in another shark species, the velvet belly lantern shark.

In addition to being able to glow continuously, the roughly 2-foot (60-centimeter) lantern sharks can illuminate small patches of skin in short bursts.

For example, "males and females can recognize each other in the dark just by looking at their sexual parts," Mallefet said. For brief periods, "the male's claspers"—a pair of sperm-

transferring organs—"are luminous."

(Related: "Shark Fins Traced to Home Waters Using DNA—A First.")

Curious whether the lantern and pygmy sharks regulate their glows in the same way, the researchers injected the three hormones—as well as neurotransmitters that control bioluminescence in deep-sea bony fish—into pygmy shark skin samples.

In both species, the study found, melatonin induces a steady glow, and alpha-MSH turns off the glow. Likewise, neurotransmitters have no effect in either species.

But prolactin, which triggers bursts of light in lantern sharks, causes pygmy shark light organs to dim, study leader Claes said.

That means the pygmy shark can't glow in short bursts and must light up only for camouflage, the team concluded.

**Single-Origin Bioluminescence**

Because lantern and pygmy sharks belong to the only two shark families known to glow, the discovery that both species use the same hormones hints that all shark bioluminescence sprang from a single act of evolution, the study says.

But the simplicity of the pygmy shark's system suggests that the tiny species is more closely related to the first glowing shark ancestor, the researchers say.

Lantern sharks must be related to a later ancestral species, one that took up residence in deeper, darker reaches and evolved more complex lighting control.

"These sharks used their luminescence not only to disappear," Mallefet said, "but also to communicate."

(Pictures: Biggest Whale Shark "Swarm" Found.)

Despite the researchers' success at unraveling how bioluminescent sharks glow, it's still unclear what substance within the sharks is glowing—something the study team is now investigating.

So far, sharks' light-emitting organs don't appear to be powered by bacteria, as in many glowing animals, or by chemicals known to illuminate other creatures, said Mallefet.

"It's an enigma ... maybe something really new" in the animal kingdom, he said.

*The glowing-shark study will be published May 15 in the* Journal of Experimental Biologists.

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# To live and die (and live again) in Bolivia: the Fiesta de las Ñatitas



Order member Paul Koudounaris reports from Bolivia on his annual visit during *Fiesta de las Ñatitas* – a time when the important bond between the living and the dead is celebrated.



unnamed-1

Yesterday morning was a very special day for little Miguel. His family had taken pains with his appearance on this day, and he looked resplendent. Bundled warmly against the cold morning air, he was taken to a chapel in their native La Paz, Bolivia, and seated with pride directly in front of the altar. This could be the beginning of a story about a child's Baptism or first Communion. But despite Miguel's diminutive size, he is not a child. Nor in fact is he a living person.

Miguel is a human skull. Not just any skull, however. He is what is known as a *ñatita*, a local Bolivian slang that means a "pug-nosed one," roughly referring to the flattened appearance of human crania, but one which exercises certain beneficial powers. How and when death came to the person from whence this skull came is unknown—it gives the appearance of having been that of a teenager, and was acquired nine months ago from a friend at a dental school. At the school, it was simply a specimen, but given over to a family, one which subscribes to local beliefs about the powers inherent in skulls, it became kin . . . it became Miguel. And it became a *ñatita*. Cared for and treated as an esteemed member of the household Miguel used his abilities to protect his newfound family and bring them good fortune. And yesterday he was taken to his first *Fiesta de las Ñatitas*.



unnamed-8

There he would be celebrated among thousands of his kind—thousands of skulls that have taken up residence with local families and established similar bonds. The *Fiesta* is a chance for those who care for these skulls to thank them publicly for their services. Some of their accomplishments are impressive, others seem mundane, but in a decade of coming here to document the festival and interview its participants, I have come to know many of them well. Marcos, for instance, arriving in a humble cardboard box, is credited with having prevented burglars from entering the home of his owner, an elderly woman. Meanwhile, Andres, in a carved wooden shrine, is said to have aided his owner with his studies in medical school and helped him on his way to becoming a prominent physician. Esmeralda, crowned with a floral wreath and seated on a green velvet cushion, advised her owner so astutely on business

matters that he now runs one of the country's most profitable import/export companies.


unnamed-14

These and so many more were present in the chapel at La Paz's sprawling Cemetery General, which every November 8 holds the most elaborate *Fiesta de las Ñatitas*. Estimated to be the largest ever, yesterday's celebration saw over ten thousand people come through the gates. They came to celebrate an incredible bond, one that is simply unimaginable in modern Western society, where the dead have become ghettoized and stigmatized as an abject group. The bond is not between the living and the dead, however, because to those assembled at the *Fiesta* the "dead" are in fact still a vital and sentient group. The bond is simply one between friends, who on one side happen to be living, and on the other side happen to be dead. But that difference is seen as flimsy and inconsequential, because for those who subscribe to the powers of the *ñatitas*, the divide is easily crossed. For those who do not, however, it is wholly perplexing phenomenon.


unnamed-3

**The *ñatitas: whose skull is it, anyway?***

It's possible to find people at the *Fiesta de las Ñatitas* carrying skulls of loved ones—one woman with whom I am acquainted brings the mummified head of her husband each year, and others bring fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles, or even children who died prematurely. Outsiders tend to assume that there must be some preexistent relationship between the skull and the people who care for it, but in fact this is seldom the case. Take, for example, Miguel in our introduction—there is no known provenance to the skull, and the family which now treats him as one of their own has no idea who he (or perhaps even she) may have once been.

The skull which becomes a *ñatita* is, in the vast majority of cases, that of a total stranger. Anonymous crania may be acquired from various sources, including medical schools and archeological sites, but most commonly they are acquired from grave diggers. At La Paz's General Cemetery, for instance, gravesites are not purchased outright, but rather leased, and when some future generation eventually lapses in payment the bones of the deceased will be removed. Those who have been exhumed are supposed to be incinerated, and their ashes dumped in a common grave, but their skulls are often brokered by those who work at the cemetery.

If this anonymity seems vexing, it must be understood that the *ñatitas* are steeped in the idiosyncratic ways that human spiritual nature was conceived of by the Aymara, the indigenous people of the local highlands. They traditionally believed that a person's spirit is



unnamed-15

comprised of multiple manifestations of *ajayu*, a word is typically translated as soul—it's an awkward translation, however, since the *ajayu* is more subtle and nuanced than the Christian conception of the soul. There are greater and lesser aspects of *ajayu* which together form one's character attributes, but after death may separate into unique entities.



unnamed-2

Thus, the spirit that manifests itself as a *ñatita* may not necessarily be of the same identity as the person whose skull is in question. This, of course, makes it easier to bond with the skulls of strangers, but I have also encountered cases where crania of known provenance were housing spirits of alternate identities. In one instance, a woman explained that the skull she carried to the *Fiesta* was that of her uncle Fernando, but that the spirit which communicated with her was a girl named Ana Maria. In another, a masculine spirit named Fidel was manifesting itself through a skull known to have been that of a young girl. It's not as schizophrenic as it may sound, if one acknowledges that each of us, in the makeup of our character, is really an amalgamation of several different and even conflicting aspects: different measures of impetuous, wise, youthful, mature, strong, weak, and so on, all of which coalesce to form our personality. As for the particular spirit which will communicate as a *ñatita*, once a bond is established it will reveal an identity, often during a dream, and open a dialogue with its living benefactor. This person will then perform rituals and makes offerings in its honor, and over time the two parties will become intimately connected, establishing a relationship similar to that between close family members.

The skull will be kept in a shrine within the home, surrounded by cigarettes, bags of coca leaves, flower petals, and other small gifts which have been left for it. It may also be given characteristic decorations, with cotton balls in the eye sockets (to replace its missing eyeballs), and tin foil around its jaws (as simulacra for lips) being most common. A single *ñatita* will be enough to provide luck, tranquility, and protection for a household, but in some



*unnamed-19*

cases several skulls, each with a different set of powers, may be present. It is common, for instance, to find multiple *ñatitas* in the homes of local *yatiri*, an Aymara term for a healer or spiritualist. Their residences are treated as neighborhood sanctuaries, and locals who lack their own *ñatita* will often select one among the skulls there as their patron, and visit frequently to offer prayers.

Some of these collections are extensive. The largest has grown to 54 and turned the living room of its owner into a small scale charnel house. Perhaps the most famous, however, is a set of 18 *ñatitas* belonging to a *yatiri* named Doña Ana; these skulls have developed a sizeable cult following and are considered by many to have miraculous powers. Each skull has its own area of expertise, including health, love, finance, school work, and domestic matters. Housed in a special room lit by candle light, Doña Ana's *ñatitas* are often surrounded by a throng of worshippers. Lest there be any doubt about the effectiveness of her skulls, Doña Ana keeps a pile of written testimonials affirming their prowess.


*unnamed-18*


***unnamed-11***

**Straddling two worlds: the living dead**

Surrounding Doña Ana's enshrined skulls are small images and statues of Catholic saints. This is typical—Catholic symbolism such as the Rosary, Virgin Mary, and Christ blessing are almost as ubiquitous as coca leaves when it come to the *ñatitas*. Added to the fact that the *Fiesta* takes place in a chapel a week after All Saints and All Souls Days, at the end of the Octave of the Dead, there is ample evidence that some level of syncretism between indigenous Aymara and traditional Catholic beliefs has gone on. Indeed, those who bring arrive at the cemetery toting skulls universally consider themselves to be both good Catholics *and* Aymara, and do not see any conflict between the two. The process of syncretism is more superficial than it initially seems, however, and the veneration of the *ñatitas* has proven highly resistant to Western attitudes towards death. Despite being held in a cemetery stocked full of skulls, the *Fiesta* is in no way a celebration of death, and those gathered in attendance will take umbrage at any insinuation that it is morbid.

***All photographs by Paul Koudounaris***

**Paul Koudounaris** is an author and photographer in Los Angeles. His PhD in Art History has



unnamed-17

taken him around the world to document charnel houses and ossuaries. His books of photography include *The Empire of Death* and *Heavenly Bodies*, which features the little known skeletons taken from the Roman Catacombs in the seventeenth century and decorated with jewels by teams of nuns. His other academic interests include Sicilian sex ghosts and demonically possessed cats. For the past several years Paul has travelled to Bolivia to photograph and



unnamed-7



unnamed-6



unnamed-20

research *Fiesta de las Natitas.*

Posted November 9, 2015 by caitlin & filed under Blog.

**About the Order**

The Order of the Good Death is a group of funeral industry professionals, academics, and artists exploring ways to prepare a death phobic culture for their inevitable mortality.

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# Top five hauntings in history

*Tuesday 26th August 2014*



Tales of ghosts and ghouls have, for centuries, captured the imagination. Here, Professor Owen Davies from the University of Hertfordshire, a historian who specialises in witchcraft, magic and ghosts from the ancient world to the modern era, shares his top five hauntings in history.

*This article was first published on 31 October 2013*



*Vintage engraving from 1877 of a man being haunted by the ghost of a young woman*

**16th century**

Anne Boleyn, whose headless ghost is rumoured to haunt the vicinity of the Tower of London and other locations, may be the most famous ghost of the 16th century. But instead I nominate a literary hoax ghost.

Following the Reformation, Protestant theologians dismissed ghosts as Catholic inventions, delusions and frauds. A good Protestant should not believe in ghosts.

Published in the late 16th century, John Scogan's Scoggin's Jests tells how the eponymous hero detected a fraudulent ghost while in Rome (of course!)

The hoaxer intended to frighten a wealthy widow into leaving her money. One evening he "came into her house & lapped himselfe in a white sheete, counterfetting a spirit, thinking she would run her wayes."

Scoggin catches him and beats him with a cudgel.

**17th century**

During the second half of the 17th century, a profound intellectual debate flourished about the reality of ghosts and witches.

For some, the possibility of modern miracles, and as a consequence the very foundations of Christianity, were at stake. Ghost sceptics were denounced as dangerous atheists.

The haunting of the home of John Mompesson at Tedworth (now Tidworth), Wiltshire, during the early 1660s, was a much-cited case in the debate.

The haunting consisted primarily of mystery drumming noises, but other sounds and spectral evidence were recorded.

Rather than attributing them to the restless spirit of a deceased person, those who believed in their reality explained that they were caused by a demonic spirit sent in revenge by a drummer that Mompesson had convicted not long before.

**18th century**

This has to be the Cock Lane Ghost. Few other ghosts attracted so much notoriety at the time and in following centuries.

In 1762, in Cock Lane, not far from St Paul's Cathedral, strange knockings and visions were reported to be emanating from the bedroom of one Elizabeth Parsons.

Communication was attempted with the spirit by a system of knocks – such as would be used in early spiritualism 80 years later. This apparently revealed that the source of the disturbances was the ghost of Fanny Lynes, the mistress of William Kent.

Fanny's ghost confirmed rumours that she had been poisoned by Kent.

The case was a London sensation, attracting the attention of renowned literary figures such as Samuel Johnson, Horace Walpole and Oliver Goldsmith. The sceptics argued that it was all an elaborate hoax to defame Kent, and indeed a defamation suit was brought to court.

**19th century**

In the age of the folklorist, medium and psychical researcher, there are so many cases to choose from.

I have plumped for a ghost that certainly never existed – the notorious and tragic Hammersmith Ghost.

During the dark evenings of the winter of 1803/04, word spread through the streets of Hammersmith that a ghost was molesting people. One rumour had it that it was the spirit of a suicide buried in Hammersmith churchyard.

On the night of 3 January a local bricklayer and plasterer named Thomas Milward was making his way home, dressed in the white linen clothes of his trade. He had already been mistaken for a ghost, and his mother had warned him about walking the streets at night in white.

On this occasion a drink-fuelled pair set out from a local pub to catch the ghost, and one of them, catching sight of Milward's ghostly figure in the dark, shot him dead.

**20th century**

For much of the century no man was more associated with ghost research than Harry Price (1881–1948). He was a larger-than-life character who loved the media, and assembled a unique library of rare works on the occult and paranormal.

His most famous investigation was that of Borley Rectory, Essex, which came to be known as the most haunted house in Britain.

Apparently haunted by the troubled spirits of a medieval monk and nun, numerous poltergeist phenomena were reported, and ghostly figures were seen walking the house and grounds. In 1937 Price rented the rectory, and advertised in The Times for “Responsible persons of leisure and intelligence, intrepid, critical, and unbiased, are invited to join rota of observers in a year’s night and day investigation of alleged haunted house.”

The rectory was ruined by fire in 1939 (some say by ghostly hands), and the site continues to be a hot spot for psychical investigators.

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R.A.I.R.O. Recherche opérationnelle/Operations Research
(vol. 16, n° 4, novembre 1982, p. 379 à 390)

# THE TRANSYLVANIAN PROBLEM OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES (*) (1)

by R. HARTL and A. MEHLMANN (2)

Abstract. — *This paper deals with a typical problem of renewable resources described in terms of an optimal control model. The differences in the analysis of the three cases of concave, linear, and convex utility functions are pointed out and optimal solutions are obtained. It is also demonstrated that the size of the discount rate can determine the structure of the optimal policy.*

Keywords: maximum principle; phase-plane analysis; bang-bang control; economics of human resources; vampire myth.

Résumé. — *Cet article traite d'un problème typique de ressources renouvelables, modélisé sous forme de commande optimale. On met en relief les différences d'analyse dans les trois cas d'une fonction d'utilité concave, linéaire, ou convexe, pour lesquels on obtient les solutions optimales. On démontre aussi que la valeur du taux d'actualisation peut déterminer la structure de la politique optimale.*

*But first on earth, as Vampyre sent*
*Thy corpse shall from its tomb be rent*
*Then ghastly haunt thy native place*
*And suck the blood of all thy race*

Lord BYRON, The Giaor

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the vampire myth has a central place in our consciousness which makes its appeal and its attraction awesome. An exact definition of the vampire, called also by the Transylvanians *strigoiu*, may be found in Chamber's Encyclopedia, the work so highly regarded by Victorian writers (*see* also Haining [3] for a comprehensive analysis). Vampirism research (Rohr [10], Summers [12, 13]), works of scholarship on the vampire legend (MacNally and Florescu [7, 8], Wolf [14]) and studies of the vampire in film (*see* the excellent filmography in Michel [9]) are only a few remarkable facets of the interest in this subject.

(*) Received November 1981.
(1) An earlier version of this paper was presented at the "Workshop on Optimal Control Theory and Economic Analysis" held on October 28-30, 1981 in Vienna, Austria.
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Now we will show that the differences in the maximum conditions in table I for the cases (*b*) and (*c*) are, though small, of crucial importance:

PROPOSITION 3: *Consider the* convex *case (of an unsatiable vampire). If the vampire's discount rate is small:* $r<n+a$, *then there exists* no optimal policy. *However, there exists a series of (suboptimal) trajectories* $\{c_n\}$ *converging to the optimal solution of the linear model (proposition* 2) *such that:*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\,U(c_n)\,dt=\sup_c\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\,U(c)\,dt.$$

*Proof* : In the lemma above, we have already shown that a switch from 0 to $\bar{c}$ (from $\bar{c}$ to 0) can only be optimal if $x\leqq x^\infty$ (if $x\geqq x^\infty$), which implies that there is at most one switching point. Thus any solution with $x(\tau)\leqq x^\infty$ and $c(\tau)=\bar{c}$ for some $\tau\geqq 0$ will violate the constraint $x(t)\geqq 0$, since switching to $c=0$ is no longer possible since $x(t)\leqq x^\infty$ for $t\geqq\tau$. On the other hand any solution with the property "$c(t)=0$ if $x(t)\leqq x^\infty$" is non-optimal: In this case changing $c(t)=0$ to $c>0$ in some nonvanishing interval $(t_1, t_2)$ will still give a feasible solution yielding a higher value of the total utility (2). In a similar way it is easy to show that any of the four possible policies ($c=0$, $c=\bar{c}$, switch $0\to\bar{c}$, switch $\bar{c}\to 0$) is either non-optimal or infeasible, which implies that there is no optimal solution.

The reason for this non-existence of an optimal policy is the fact that $c=c^\infty\in(0,\bar{c})$ is not possible along an optimal path if the Hamiltonian is convex. Now consider the linear utility function $\tilde{U}(c)=\bar{U}c$ where $\bar{U}$ is *defined as* $\bar{U}=U(\bar{c})$. Then obviously $U(c)<\tilde{U}(c)$ for $c\in(0,\bar{c})$ and $U(c)=\tilde{U}(c)$ for $c=0$, $\bar{c}$. Thus the optimal trajectory $c^*$ of this linear model (given by proposition 2) establishes an upper bound for the value of the utility functional (2) for any consumption policy $c$ of the convex vampire. Now define the policy $\{c_n\}$ by "*first approach the resource level* $x^\infty$ *as fast as possible by either choosing* $c=0$ (*if* $x<x^\infty$) *or* $c=\bar{c}$ (*if* $x>x^\infty$). *Then proceed by following the rule: switch from* 0 *to* $\bar{c}$ (*from* $\bar{c}$ *to* 0) *if the resource* $x$ *reaches the level* $x^\infty+1/n$ ($x^\infty-1/n$)". This leads to a cyclical "saw-toothed" bang-bang policy which is non-optimal. However, we have $U(c_n)\equiv\tilde{U}(c_n)$ (since $c_n=0$ or $\bar{c}$) and $\lim_{n\to\infty} c_n=c^*$, which, in turn, implies:

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\,U(c_n\,dt)=\lim_{n\to\infty}\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\,\tilde{U}(c_n\,dt)$$

$$=\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\,\tilde{U}(c^*)\,dt=\sup_c\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\,U(c)\,dt,$$

using the well known Arzela-Osgood's theorem. □

The practical implication of proposition 3 for an unsatiable vampire with low discount rate is to behave nearly like the linear vampire. The only difference is that instead of choosing $c=c^{\infty}$ to maintain $x^{\infty}$ it is "optimal" to use a *chattering control* (switch from $c=0$ to $c=\bar{c}$ and back as fast as possible) in order to keep as close as possible to the equilibrium level $x^{\infty}$. *See* also Clark [2], page 172.

Let us now turn to the case (B) where future utilities are rather unimportant. Bearing in mind that the optimal policies for the three types of vampires (*a*, *b*, *c*) are very similar to each other in case (A) [except that $x^{\infty}$ is reached in finite time in cases (*b*, *c*) and is approached asymptotically in case (*a*)] we can conjecture that in case (B) it will be optimal to exploit the resource as fast as possible by choosing $c=\bar{c}$ and then switching to $c=0$ if the resource is completely used up (*cf.* proposition 1 B). The following result shows that this is the case.

PROPOSITION 4: *For both, the linear and the convex vampires (b and c) the optimal policy in the case* (B) *of a high discount rate is:*

$$\dot{c}(t)=\begin{cases}\bar{c} & \text{for } 0\leqq t<\tau,\\ 0 & \text{for } t\geqq\tau,\end{cases}$$

*where the resource x is driven to zero within finite time* $\tau$ *given by:*

$$\tau=\frac{1}{\bar{c}-n-a}\ln\left[\left(x_0+\frac{\bar{c}}{\bar{c}-n-a}\right)\Big/\frac{\bar{c}}{\bar{c}-n-a}\right].$$

The proof is an easy repetition of the method used for proving proposition 2, which is why we omit it.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have obtained optimal policies for asymptotically satiated, blood-maximizing and unsatiable vampires. The applicability of the results derived should be obvious to any reader. It should be noted that after the first presentation of an earlier version of this paper (Hartl and Mehlmann [4]) the need for a defensive strategy against optimal behaving vampires became obvious. Therefore, Snower [11] provided the human beings with a decision rule of optimal splitting the output of the economy between consumption and production of defensive weapons against (non-optimal behaving) vampires.

Further research in this area by considering a differential game where both species can react on the decision of the other one is needed. Beside the undeniable practical relevance, the contribution of our study is mainly in pointing out the following results, which seem to be of general importance for many other economic control models:

1) The treatment of concave and linear (and convex, resp.) optimal control models requires completely different approaches. In particular, in sufficiently simple concave models the method of phase plane analysis is the appropriate tool, whereas in the latter models the problem of synthesis of bang-bang and singular solution pieces plays the crucial role in the analysis. We have also demonstrated, why in convex models there may be no optimal policy (no singular solution possible).

2) Although different in the analysis, the three types of objective functionals amount to similar optimal solutions. More specifically, there are equilibrium (singular) values of the resource stock which are to be approached either asymptotically or as fast as possible.

3) If the future utilities are quite important (i. e. the discount rate is small) then these equilibrium values are positive and for future generations approximately the same stock of the resource will be available as for the present one. Otherwise the resource is used up completely within finite time or asymptotically as $t \to \infty$, which can be regarded as policy of "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die".

4) We have also demonstrated the method of dividing one state variable by another one in order to reduce the dimension of the state space of an optimal control problem. This method is particularly useful in many resource problems. *See*, for instance, Kemp and Long [6].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Our aim is to solve this problem without getting in touch with it, thus avoiding the fate which uncountably many vampirologists have undergone.

A mathematical model is presented, which is both sufficiently easy to be solved completely and general enough in order to demonstrate several methods which are of importance for solving many economic control problems (e. g. problems of renewable resources). In particular we discuss the assumptions of linear, convex and concave utility (objective) functions and emphasize the differences in the analysis of these three cases, as well as the common properties of the resulting optimal solutions.

## 2. OPTIMAL BLOODSUCKING STRATEGIES FOR DYNAMIC CONTINUOUS VAMPIRES

The isolated Transylvanian community Mamadracului may be found on any map giving the exact location of Dracula's Castle. In this community, let $v(t)$ denote the expected number of vampires at time $t$. The expected resource of human beings at time $t$ will be denoted by $h(t)$. Every person who, when alive, has had his blood sucked by a vampire, will, after his immediate death, deal with other persons in like manner. Without loss of generality the following dynamic system equations may be derived:

$$\dot{v} = -av + cv; \qquad \dot{h} = nh - cv, \tag{1}$$

where $n$ denotes the growth rate of the human population, $a$ denotes the failure rate of vampires due to contact with sunlight, crucifixes, garlic, and vampire hunters. The bloodsucking rate per vampire at time $t$ is given by $c(t)$. Blood is measured in units defined by the average capacity of the human body.

The instantaneous utility of blood is $U(c)$ with marginal utility $U' > 0$. A few words are in order on the subject of concave, linear, and convex utility functions. We shall consider the three cases:

($a$) the asymptotically satiated vampire: $U'' < 0$;

($b$) the blood maximizing vampire: $U(c) = \bar{U}c$;

($c$) the unsatiable vampire: $U'' > 0$;

in which a vampire consuming two human beings rather than one derives a utility, which is smaller than, exactly equal, and larger than twice as large, respectively. In comparable economic control models where the decision makers are human beings (*cf.* Arrow [1], Intriligator [5]) usually a concave utility function is considered. In what follows we shall explore the implications and consequences of the assumptions ($a$), ($b$), and ($c$) on the structure of the

optimal policy. For reasons of convenience we will assume $U(0)=0$ and restrict $c$ to the bounded interval $[0, \bar{c}]$ in cases $(b)$ and $(c)$. In case $(a)$ this is not necessary since a concave utility function implies that extremely high values of consumption are suboptimal.

Future utilities are discounted by $r$ being the rate of time preference. Thus the vampire's objective is to maximize the present value of the utility stream:

$$\int_0^\infty e^{-rt} U(c(t))\, dt, \tag{2}$$

subject to (1), and the nonnegativity condition $h \geqq 0$. This optimal control problem with two state variables $(v, h)$ and one control instrument $c$ can be reduced to the following problem:

$$\text{maximize (2)} \quad \text{s. t.} \qquad \dot{x} = (n+a-c)\,x - c, \qquad x \geqq 0, \tag{3}$$

where $x$ denotes the *humans/vampires ratio* $x=h/v$. Thus we are facing a typical consumption-resource trade off. The vampire society derives utility from consumption of blood but in sucking the blood of a human being and in turning him to a vampire the resource of human beings is reduced whereas the number of vampires is increased. Both of these effects diminish the resource of humans per vampire curtailing future possibilities of consumption. Applying standard control theory (Pontrjagin's Maximum Principle in current value formulation) we obtain necessary optimality conditions which in turn are:

$$H = U(c) + p\,[(n+a-c)\,x - c], \qquad \text{and} \qquad \operatorname*{Max}_{c \geqq 0} H. \tag{4}$$

The shadow price $p$ satisfies the adjoint equation:

$$\dot{p} = (r+c-n-a)\,p. \tag{5}$$

Note that $x \geqq 0$ is equivalent with $\lim_{t \to \infty} x(t) \geqq 0$ as can be seen from the state equation (3). The transversality conditions are:

$$\lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-rt} p(t) \geqq 0, \qquad \lim_{t \to \infty} e^{-rt} p(t)\, x(t) = 0. \tag{6}$$

This leads to sufficient conditions for the optimality of the solution $(x, c)$ if the derived Hamiltonian $\max H$ is concave in $x$.

We now address ourselves to the different implications of the maximum condition (4) in the three cases of concave, linear and convex utility functions (and Hamiltonians, respectively):

TABLE I

| $(a)\ U''<0$ | $(b)\ U(c)=\bar{U}c$ | $(c)\ U''>0$ |
|---|---|---|
| $H'=0 \Rightarrow$ $U'(c)=p(1+x)$ provided that $c>0$ i.e. $U'(0)>p(1+x)$ | $c(t)=\begin{cases}0 \\ \bar{c}\end{cases}$ if $\bar{U}\{\lesseqgtr\}p(1+x)$ and $c(t)$ undefined $\varepsilon[0,\bar{c}]$ if $\bar{U}=p(1+x)$ | $c(t)=0$ or $\bar{c}$ |

The optimal policies in cases ($b$) and ($c$) seem to be almost the same. However, it will be seen later that the differences between the two are important for the existence of an optimal solution. In the concave case marginal utility always equals the value $p(1+x)$ of the $1+x$ units of marginal resource depletion. In the other cases the resource is depleted with zero and maximum effort if the marginal utility is smaller and larger than this value, respectively.

It is now convenient to analyse the three cases separately.

### 3. THE ASYMPTOTICALLY SATIATED VAMPIRE

The standard way that concave control models (i.e. $H$ is concave in $c$) are treated is using the method of phase plane analysis. This could be done by analyzing the canonical system (3,5) directly (*cf.* Arrow [1]) or by obtaining a set of differential equations for $(x, c)$ (*cf.* Intriligator [5]). Since we are mainly interested in the behavior of $c$ we choose the latter approach. Thus we differentiate the $H_c=0$ condition in table I with respect to time to obtain:

$$\dot{p}(1+x)+\dot{x}p=U''\dot{c} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \dot{c}=\frac{U'(c)}{U''(c)}\left[r-\frac{n+a}{1+x}\right], \tag{7}$$

which may be interpreted in terms of the elasticity of marginal utility $\sigma \equiv U''c/U'$. In order to determine the behavior of the optimal solution in the $(x, c)$-diagram we investigate the (curves $\dot{x}=0$ and $\dot{c}=0$ called) isoclines:

$$\begin{aligned} &\dot{x}=0 \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad c=(n+a)x/(1+x); \\ &\dot{c}=0 \quad \Leftrightarrow \quad c=0 \qquad \text{or} \qquad x=(n+a-r)/r, \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

where we assume $\lim_{c \to 0} U'(c)/U''(c) = 0$ which is satisfied for any "good" utility function such as $U(c) = c^{\alpha}$; $0 < \alpha < 1$ or $U(c) = \ln(c)$. Thus the rest points of the system (3,7) are:

TABLE II

| Case | Rest Points |
|---|---|
| (A) $n+a>r$ | $x^{\infty} = \frac{n+a-r}{r}$, $c^{\infty} = n+a-r$ and $x=c=0$ |
| (B) $n+a<r$ | $x=c=0$ |

Computing the elements of the Jacobian matrix:

$$\frac{\partial \dot{x}}{\partial x} = n+a-c, \qquad \frac{\partial \dot{x}}{\partial c} = -(1+x),$$

$$\frac{\partial \dot{c}}{\partial x} = \frac{U'(n+a)}{U''(1+x)^2}, \qquad \frac{\partial \dot{c}}{\partial c} = \frac{dU'/U''}{dc}\left[r - \frac{n+a}{1+x}\right].$$

We obtain that:

$$\det(J) = \frac{\partial \dot{x}}{\partial x}\frac{\partial \dot{c}}{\partial c} - \frac{\partial \dot{x}}{\partial c}\frac{\partial \dot{c}}{\partial x}$$

equals $U'(n+a)/[U''(1+x)]$ for $c=c^{\infty}$, $x=x^{\infty}$ and equals:

$$(n+a)(r-n-a)\frac{dU'/U''}{dc} \qquad \text{for} \quad c=x=0.$$

Hence, in the case (A) of a *small discount rate* the point $(x^{\infty}, c^{\infty})$ is a saddle point and (0,0) is an unstable node. Figure 1 gives a sketch of the phase plane in this case where the optimal solution is represented by the stable path converging towards the equilibrium. In fact this is the only solution of (3,7) which satisfies the transversality condition (6). In the case (B) of a *large discount rate* (future utilities are thus rather unimportant) there exist no positive equilibrium values and (0,0) is a saddle point. The phase plane diagram in this case is depicted in figure 2.

The results derived so far deserve formal expression as:

PROPOSITION 1: *The optimal solution is given by a feedback rule* $c = c(x)$ *with* $c'(x) > 0$ *and* $c(0) = 0$:

(A) *If the discount rate is small:* $r<n+a$ *then positive equilibrium values* $x^\infty$, $c^\infty$ (cf. table II) *exist. Furthermore,* $\lim_{t\to\infty}(x(t),\ c(t)) = (x^\infty,\ c^\infty)$ *and* $x(t)\ \{\lesseqgtr\}\ x^\infty$ *implies* $c(t)\ \{\lesseqgtr\}\ c^\infty$ *and* $\dot{x}(t),\ \dot{c}(t)\ \{\gtreqless\}\ 0$;

(B) *If the discount rate is large:* $r>n+a$ *then* $\lim_{t\to\infty} x(t) = \lim_{t\to\infty} c(t) = 0$ *and* $\dot{x}(t),\ \dot{c}(t)<0$.

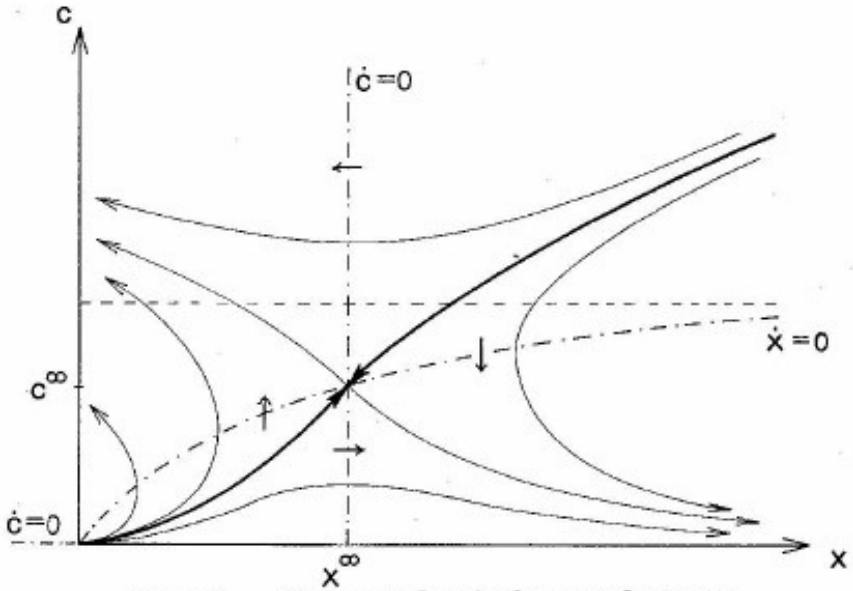



**Figure 1. —The phase plane in the case of** $n+a>r$

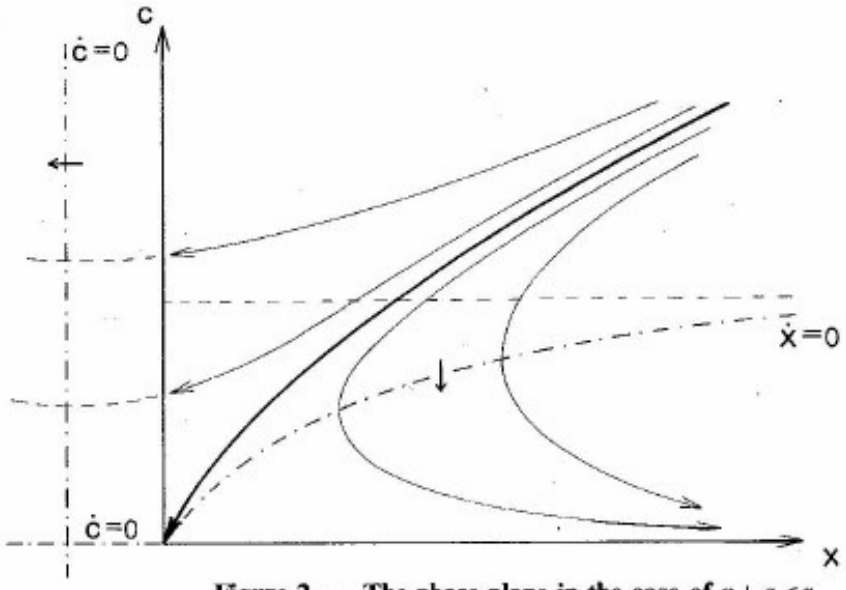



**Figure 2. —The phase plane in the case of** $n+a<r$

This result seems to be quite reasonable: if the future utilities are important ($r$ small), then in the limit the resource is not used up completely ($x(t)\to x^\infty>0$). Otherwise ($r$ large) the present consumption (extraction) is high and the resource approaches zero level.

In the equilibrium $(x^\infty, c^\infty)$ the humans/vampires ratio $x^\infty$ is constant. Then, by (1), it is easy to see that $\dot{v}/v=\dot{h}/h=n-r$. Thus both populations vampires and humans will grow (diminish) at the constant rate $n-r$ if the natural growth rate of the human population $n$ exceeds (falls below) the discount rate $r$. The same result holds asymptotically for arbitrary values of $x_0$ as time tends to infinity.

## 4. THE BANG-BANG VAMPIRES

The linearity and convexity, of the Hamiltonians in the cases (*b*) and (*c*) of the blood maximizing and unsatiable vampire, respectively, implies that the optimal consumption is on the boundary of the control interval (*see* table I). The only exception is the singular solution in the linear case. Before we can determine the optimal solution by solving the problem of synthesis (i.e. patching together bang-bang and singular solution pieces) some preliminary results are needed.

Let us first analyze the case (A) of a small discount rate: $r<n+a$.

LEMMA : *Along an optimal solution path* $(x(t), c(t))$ *a switch from:*

$$c=0 \quad \text{to } c=\bar{c}; \qquad c=\bar{c} \quad \text{to } c=0,$$

*at time t is possible only if* $x(t) \left\{ \begin{matrix} \leqslant \\ \geqslant \end{matrix} \right\} x^\infty$ *where the "equilibrium" level* $x^\infty$ *is defined as in table II.*

*Proof :* Switching from 0 to $\bar{c}$ at time $\tau$ implies, by table I, that $(1+x)$ $p \{ \gtrless \} \bar{U}$ for $t \{ \lesssim \} \tau$ at least in the neighbourhood of the point $\tau$. This, in turn, implies that $d/dt\ (1+x)\ p \leqq 0$ at time $t=\tau$. Using (3,5) we obtain:

$$\frac{d}{dt}(1+x)\ p=\dot{p}\ (1+x)+p\dot{x}=p\ [r\ (1+x)-(n+a)]=pr\ [x(t)-x^\infty], \qquad (8)$$

which completes the proof, since $p$, being the shadow price of a stock of a resource, is always positive. □

Now it is easy to show, that

PROPOSITION 2: *Consider the* linear *case (of a blood maximizing vampire). If the vampire's discount rate is small:* $r<n+a$ *[case* (A)*] then there exist positive singular levels* $x^\infty$ *and* $c^\infty$ *which are identical with the equilibrium values* $(x^\infty, c^\infty)$ *in table I for the concave case. It is optimal to approach the equilibrium*

*level $x^\infty$ as fast as possible by choosing either $c=0$ or $c=\bar{c}$ and then to maintain this level by consuming $c=c^\infty$. In particular, if:*

α) $\underline{x_0<x^\infty}$ *then* $c(t)=\begin{cases}0\\ c^\infty\end{cases}$ *for* $\begin{cases}0\leqq t<\bar{t}\\ t\geqq\bar{t}\end{cases}$. *The singular level* $x^\infty$ *is reached at the time:*

$$\bar{t}=\frac{1}{n+a}\ln(x^\infty/x_0), \tag{9}$$

β) $\underline{x_0=x^\infty}$ *then* $c(t)\equiv c^\infty$ *and* $x(t)\equiv x^\infty$;

γ) $\underline{x_0>x^\infty}$ *then* $c(t)=\begin{cases}\bar{c}\\ c^\infty\end{cases}$ *for* $\begin{cases}0\leqq t<\bar{\bar{t}}\\ t\geqq\bar{\bar{t}}\end{cases}$;

*where:*

$$\bar{\bar{t}}=\frac{1}{\bar{c}-n-a}\ln\left[\left(x_0+\frac{\bar{c}}{\bar{c}-n-a}\right)\Big/\left(x^\infty+\frac{\bar{c}}{\bar{c}-n-a}\right)\right]. \tag{10}$$

*Proof :* A singular solution piece is characterized by the equations $H_c=0$ and $d/dt\ H_c=0$. From $0=\dot{p}(1+x)+p\dot{x}=[r(1+x)-n+a]p$, using (3) and (5), we easily obtain that $x=x^\infty$ and $c=c^\infty$.

Now let us turn to *case* α). Use $c(t)=0$ and $x(t)=x_0\ e^{(n+a)t}$ as long as $x(t)<x^\infty$ and show that this policy satisfies the optimality conditions (3-6). Obviously the level $x=x^\infty$ is reached at time $\bar{t}$ given by equation (9). For $t\geqq\bar{t}$ we have:

$$x(t)=x^\infty,\qquad c(t)=c^\infty,\qquad p(t)=p^\infty=\bar{U}/(1+x^\infty)=\bar{U}r/(n+a).$$

Now, for $t\leqq\bar{t}$, we have to solve (5) backwards in time using $p(\bar{t})=p^\infty$. This yields $p(t)=p^\infty e^{-(n+a-r)(t-\bar{t})}$. Thus it remains to show that $p(1+x)>\bar{U}$ for $t<\bar{t}$ in order for (3-6) to hold. The easiest way to do that, is to combine:

$$p(\bar{t})(1+x(\bar{t}))=p^\infty(1+x^\infty)=\bar{U}\qquad\text{and}\qquad\frac{d}{dt}p(1+x)=pr[x(t)-x^\infty]<0,$$

making use of (8). This implies $p(1+x)>p^\infty(1+x^\infty)=\bar{U}$ for $t<\bar{t}$ which completes the proof of part α). The same procedure can be used in order to prove parts β) and γ). □

Now we will show that the differences in the maximum conditions in table I for the cases (*b*) and (*c*) are, though small, of crucial importance:

PROPOSITION 3: *Consider the* convex *case* (*of an unsatiable vampire*). *If the vampire's discount rate is small:* $r<n+a$, *then there exists* no optimal policy. *However, there exists a series of* (*suboptimal*) *trajectories* $\{c_n\}$ *converging to the optimal solution of the linear model* (*proposition* 2) *such that:*

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}U(c_n)\,dt=\operatorname*{supr}_c\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}U(c)\,dt.$$

*Proof* : In the lemma above, we have already shown that a switch from 0 to $\bar{c}$ (from $\bar{c}$ to 0) can only be optimal if $x\leqq x^\infty$ (if $x\geqq x^\infty$), which implies that there is at most one switching point. Thus any solution with $x(\tau)\leqq x^\infty$ and $c(\tau)=\bar{c}$ for some $\tau\geqq 0$ will violate the constraint $x(t)\geqq 0$, since switching to $c=0$ is no longer possible since $x(t)\leqq x^\infty$ for $t\geqq\tau$. On the other hand any solution with the property "$c(t)=0$ if $x(t)\leqq x^\infty$" is non-optimal: In this case changing $c(t)=0$ to $c>0$ in some nonvanishing interval $(t_1, t_2)$ will still give a feasible solution yielding a higher value of the total utility (2). In a similar way it is easy to show that any of the four possible policies ($c=0$, $c=\bar{c}$, switch $0\to\bar{c}$, switch $\bar{c}\to 0$) is either non-optimal or infeasible, which implies that there is no optimal solution.

The reason for this non-existence of an optimal policy is the fact that $c=c^\infty\in(0,\bar{c})$ is not possible along an optimal path if the Hamiltonian is convex. Now consider the linear utility function $\tilde{U}(c)=\bar{U}c$ where $\bar{U}$ is *defined as* $\bar{U}=U(\bar{c})$. Then obviously $U(c)<\tilde{U}(c)$ for $c\in(0,\bar{c})$ and $U(c)=\tilde{U}(c)$ for $c=0$, $\bar{c}$. Thus the optimal trajectory $c^*$ of this linear model (given by proposition 2) establishes an upper bound for the value of the utility functional (2) for any consumption policy $c$ of the convex vampire. Now define the policy $\{c_n\}$ by "*first approach the resource level* $x^\infty$ *as fast as possible by either choosing* $c=0$ (*if* $x<x^\infty$) *or* $c=\bar{c}$ (*if* $x>x^\infty$). *Then proceed by following the rule: switch from* 0 *to* $\bar{c}$ (*from* $\bar{c}$ *to* 0) *if the resource* $x$ *reaches the level* $x^\infty+1/n$ ($x^\infty-1/n$)". This leads to a cyclical "saw-toothed" bang-bang policy which is non-optimal. However, we have $U(c_n)\equiv\tilde{U}(c_n)$ (since $c_n=0$ or $\bar{c}$) and $\lim_{n\to\infty} c_n=c^*$, which, in turn, implies:

$$\lim_{n\to\infty}\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}U(c_n\,dt)=\lim_{n\to\infty}\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\tilde{U}(c_n\,dt)$$

$$=\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}\tilde{U}(c^*)\,dt=\operatorname*{supr}_c\int_0^\infty e^{-rt}U(c)\,dt,$$

using the well known Arzela-Osgood's theorem. □



*Missile Test Over California*

November 9, 2015

**‘UFO’ Trident Missile Test Over Los Angeles, Alleged Massive Explosion In Salton Sea Area Of California Desert, Spark Rumors U.S. Prepraing For World War III**

JohnThomas Didymus

Speculations exploded online after the Trident missile test over Southern California that caused widespread panic that the U.S. government has reached an advanced stage of preparation for World War III. Speculations and rumors about an ongoing preparation for World War III peaked after reports emerged in the online rumor mill of a massive explosion in the Salton Sea area alleged to have been part of the weapons test.

Prior to the Trident missile test there had been reports that with the growing tension between the U.S. and its major geopolitical rivals, Pentagon planners have concluded that a major armed conflict between the U.S. and a major military power in the next few years is inevitable. Thus, the U.S. military-industrial complex has stepped up preparations for World War III.

According to Patrick Martin, writing in the *World Socialist Website*, the U.S. military-industrial complex is responding to rising tensions with the nation’s geopolitical rivals with plans about how the U.S. could win World War III.

Pentagon planners have concluded that a major armed conflict between the U.S. and Russia or China, or both, in the next few years is inevitable. The assessment that the U.S. will likely have to go to war against a major military power in the next few years has increased the tempo of tactical and strategic preparation for World War III.

Congressional hearings by the Senate Armed Services Committee and a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee held last Tuesday, according reports, were evidence of the fact that preparations for war have reached an advanced stage, and that Democrats and Republicans have become convinced that World War III is inevitable.

*ValueWalk* reported that the hearings focused on plans for how the U.S. could win an armed conflict with a major military power. The plans were discussed under the assumption that the conflict would occur in a few years rather than in a decade or two.

The discussions during the hearings considered the technologies and assets that would be needed, including social and psychological preparation of the nation for inevitability of war.

Fresh speculations that the U.S. government is engaged in preparations for World War III erupted in the rumor blogosphere after the U.S. Navy announced that a mysterious cone-shaped blazing light that streaked across the night sky over Los Angeles and Southern California causing panic was, in fact, a planned missile test and not a UFO or a meteor as many residents of Los Angeles thought.

*CNN* reports that after the light was seen shooting through the night skies in Southern California, a spokesperson for the Navy Strategic Systems Programs Navy Cmdr. Ryan Perry, said the Navy conducted a scheduled Trident II (D5) missile test off the coast of Southern California from the ballistic missile submarine, USS Kentucky.

> "The tests were part of a scheduled, ongoing system evaluation test. Launches are conducted on a frequent, recurring basis to ensure the continued reliability of the system. Each test activity provides valuable information about our systems, thus contributing to assurance in our capabilities."

Immediately after the announcement by the military authorities, a time-lapse gif emerged, courtesy of self-described photography hobbyist Porter Tinsley, in the rumor blogosphere showing an alleged "massive" explosion in the California desert near the Salton Sea. The explosion allegedly happened at the time of the missile test.



*<img src="https://lessthanamateur.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/missile-test-from-salton-sea.gif"*

There are rumors in the conspiracy theory blogosphere that the explosion was a nuclear weapons test in the Salton Sea area. The footage sparked rumors that the U.S. government may have entered into final preparations for World War III.

It was alleged that the site of the explosion coincided with the direction in which the Trident missile was seen flying, implying that the alleged explosion was due to detonation of a warhead carried by the missile undergoing testing.

However, this contradicts the claim by the U.S. Navy that the missile undergoing test was unarmed.

Others speculated that the weapon undergoing testing was not a Trident II D-5 but a system under development designed to intercept submarine-based ICBMs launched near the U.S. Coast. This led to specualtions that the explosion near the Salton Sea exposed a vulnerability in the national defense system and that the revelation is being handled as an emergency.

But others said that the U.S. was only sending a warning to its rivals through a demonstration of its capabilities.

The doomsday conspiracy theory blog *All News Pipeline* cited an August 8, 2015, report by the *Desert Sun* which points out the historical significance of the Salton Sea area in U.S. war history.

According to the report, the Salton Sea area was used by the USAF to practice for dropping atomic bombs on Japan. Lt. Col Paul Tibbets and the crew of Enola Gay flew “hundreds of times” over Salton Sea, dropping mock bombs to practice how to escape from the blast of the atomic bomb.

[Image via Julien Solomita / YouTube]

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# Vampires and Death in New England, 1784 to 1892

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**SUMMARY** *During the 18th and 19th centuries, New England was in the grip of a terrible tuberculosis epidemic. During the 19th century, this disease was the leading cause of death in the Eastern United States, accounting for nearly 25 percent of all deaths. Despite an abundance of cures offered by an eclectic mix of practitioners, a diagnosis of consumption—as pulmonary tuberculosis was then called—was the equivalent of a death sentence. Not willing to simply watch as, one after another, their family members died, some New Englanders resorted to an old folk remedy whose roots surely must rest in Europe. Called vampirism by outsiders (a term that may never have been used by those within the communities themselves) this remedy required exhuming the bodies of deceased relatives and checking them for "unnatural" signs, such as "fresh" blood in the heart. The implicit belief was that one of the relatives was not completely dead and was maintaining some semblance of a life by draining the vital force from living relatives.*

*All of the more than 20 cases documented in New England occurred in areas outside of the Puritan heartland of Massachusetts and contiguous Connecticut—"fringe" areas that were Separatist, Tolerant, or unspecified in terms of religious affiliation. Perhaps surprisingly, from 85 to 90 percent of white New Englanders of this era were "unchurched," many practicing various hybrid religions that have been classified as "folk" in the sense that they were unofficial combinations of Christian beliefs and various folk practices of the kind often disparagingly referred to as "superstitions." Interpreting the vampire practice through diverse strands of evidence, including eye witness accounts, family stories, local legends, newspaper articles, local histories, town records, journal entries, unpublished correspondence, genealogies, and even actual human remains reveals that to many New Englanders the border between life and death was indeed far more fragile and ill defined than histories that are based solely on conventional sources have suggested.*
[Keywords: folklore, vampires, tuberculosis, death, New England]

## Introduction

Vampire incidents in New England remind us of some intrinsic questions: What is death? When is a person truly dead? Can the dead interact with the living? These questions, which transcend time and place and, therefore, speak to what it is to be human, concerned pre-twentieth century New Englanders facing a terrible tuberculosis epidemic. By 1800, one in 250 people in the Eastern United States was dying of pulmonary tuberculosis, accounting for nearly 25 percent of all deaths (Dubos and Dubos 1952:9–10; Rothman 1994:2). Despite an abundance of cures offered by an eclectic mix of practitioners, a diagnosis of consumption—as pulmonary tuberculosis was then called—was a virtual death sentence. Not willing to simply watch as their families sickened and died, some New Englanders resorted to a folk remedy that directed them to exhume the

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> If a person died of consumption and one of the family . . . was attacked soon after, people . . . opened the grave at once and examined the heart; if bloodless and decaying, the disease was supposed to be from some other cause, and the heart was restored to its body; but if the heart was fresh and contained liquid blood, it was feeding on the life of the sick person. In all such cases, they burned the heart to ashes. [Curtin 1889:58–59]

The logic explaining why people connected consumption with the undead may flow from the symptoms of the disease itself and how they correspond to vampire folklore. Consumptives suffer most at night. They awaken, coughing and in pain (sometimes described as a heavy feeling, as if someone has sat on the chest). As the disease progresses, ulcers and cavities develop in the lungs, creating a noticeably sunken chest. The sputum grows thicker, now containing blood that lingers at the corners of the mouth and on the bedclothes. Emaciation becomes extreme. An initial ruddiness of the face gives way to a deathlike pallor that, at the very last stages of the disease, is masked by a glowing, feverish flush. Family members fade away, one after another. Both consumptives and vampires are the living dead. Doomed and waiting to die, consumptives are walking corpses; pale and wasted, they embody disease and death. Vampires are the personification of consumption, an evil that slowly and surreptitiously feeds on the living, draining away life. (See Hufford 1982 for a more inclusive delineation of the nocturnal supernatural assault tradition.)

## The Living and the Dead

Blaming the dead for death seems but a short, logical step from the fundamental vampire concept that the dead have a life after death. Fear that the angry, jealous, or vengeful dead will prey on the living unless certain steps are taken to appease or disable them probably explains why the most rudimentary type of vampire is a reanimated corpse (Barber 1988:197; Murgoci 1926:320–21; Tylor 1929:19). A cause-and-effect relationship between the dead and death permeates America's everyday folklore, although the connection often lurks beneath the surface, implied but not stated. A common folk belief, found in both the United States and Great Britain, for example, is that a corpse not stiffening "is a sure sign that death will be knocking pretty soon again at the door of this house for some other member of the family" (Latham 1878:57; for U.S. examples, see Hand 1961, no. 5477). This belief suggests an uncanny connection between living and dead family members, evoking the scene at the graves of the New England vampires, where corpses appeared to be in an unnatural state, interpreted to be at least a sign, if not the actual cause, of the imminent death of kin.

The predilection of these vampires to infect their near relations with a lethal disease links pre-20th-century New England to a larger community, indeed. Two scholars tracing the roots of Pennsylvania German folk medicine observed, "Our pagan ancestors believed that sicknesses were caused by malignant demons—some of them the spirits of dead ancestors" (Brendle and Unger 1970:117). This core belief is found in Europe, India, Asia, and Africa and is as persistent as it is widespread (Frazer 1977:144). A vampire that seems particularly analogous to that of New England is the *moroi*, who resides in the region just south of the Transylvanian Alps. Like the New England vampire, a moroi stays close to home, waiting for an opportunity to settle accounts with members of its

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own family. It inhabits the body of a weaker relative by creeping into its heart, which it eventually devours (Schierup 1986:179).

Sergei Kan argues for the central position of what Robert J. Lifton called "symbolic immortality," that is, "a continuous symbolic relationship between our finite individual lives and what has gone before us and what will come after" (Kan 1989:15). Kan writes, "An anthropological analysis of the mortuary complex must incorporate this crucial dimension and relate it to whatever social, political, or economic functions a particular mortuary ritual might have. In fact, this interrelationship between the otherworldly and the more mundane concerns is the hallmark of the mortuary ritual and should be the cornerstone of mortuary analysis" (Kan 1989:16). But in the vampire case, the "continuous symbolic relationship" is not one that the living wish to maintain. It is viewed, instead, as an evil, devastating relationship that must be destroyed to return the family and community to their proper order.

Robert Hertz's notion of "double obsequies," which is central in Kan's interpretation of the Tlingit Potlatch, is especially applicable to the vampire ritual. Kan writes that Hertz:

> developed a model of primary and secondary disposal of the remains of the dead in which the process of the corpse's decay, the mourning regulations imposed on the bereaved, and the transformation of the spirit of the deceased parallel each other. Once the corpse has fully deteriorated or has been destroyed by human means and the double obsequies carried out, mourning comes to an end and the spirit of the deceased is firmly established in its new existence. [Kan 1989:13]

The secondary mortuary ritual, or double obsequies, carried out in New England was intended to identify which corpse had not "fully deteriorated" and, therefore, was yet to be "firmly established in its new existence." Burning the corpse or its heart ended the unnatural relationship between dead and living kin and, in a practical sense, completed the mourning, thus allowing the living to leave the "otherworldly concerns" and return to their "more mundane concerns."

Kan argues that our attempts to avoid "applying simplistic psychological interpretations to another culture's way of death . . . should not deter us from trying to establish how the participants' emotions are stimulated, utilized, and dealt with in the mortuary ritual" (Kan 1989:17). The Mercy Brown exhumation of 1892 is sufficiently well-documented to allow some interpretation of how Mercy's father, George Brown, interacted with kin and neighbors to resolve the crisis that a consumption epidemic had created in Exeter, Rhode Island. The crucial event in that drama was George Brown selecting a course of action from a severely limited set of grim choices. Emotions that Brown surely must have dealt with include uncertainty, fear, guilt, desperation, community, hope, resolution, healing. Following Kan, I view these emotions as defined in social contexts ("culturally constituted systems," in Kan's words) that incorporate mutual expectations about how Brown, his family and his community should feel and behave.

Edwin "Eddie" Brown was on the brink of death in March 1892. He first "began to give evidence of lung trouble" about two years earlier. According to a local newspaper, this "young married man of good habits" grew worse until, "in hopes of checking and curing" his disease, "he was induced to visit the famous Colorado Springs, where his wife followed him later on" (*Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner* 1892a:1). But Eddie grew worse, and on February 23, 1892, he and his wife

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returned to Rhode Island on the train. Following a long-standing New England social ritual, Eddie was coming home to die, to be "enmeshed in a web of concern" under the tender "death watch" of close kin. American historian Jack Larkin noted that "the prospect of dying and being buried by strangers was a truly frightening one" (Larkin 1988:98). Those chosen to be "watchers" considered it a privilege. Neighbors took turns at the sickbed so that exhausted family members could sleep. "Watchers could administer medicine when needed, but, far more important, they provided a continuous comforting presence—as well as witnesses who could quickly gather the family around if death seemed imminent" (Larkin 1988:93).

As the outcome of Eddie's condition became increasingly evident, George Brown faced a difficult decision. Would he "satisfy his neighbors" (*Providence Journal* 1892c:8) by having the bodies of his wife and two daughters exhumed and examined? Brown's neighbors were worried about consumption; they had seen it take hold in a family, then spread to others. Even before Robert Koch identified the tuberculosis bacillus in 1882, New Englanders were aware that tuberculosis was contagious and lethal. Paul Barber wrote about the "sheer terror" that prompted people to seek—and find—vampires, as their friends and neighbors were "dying in clusters, by agencies that they did not understand" (Barber 1988:121). Death itself appeared to be contagious.

Those who knew the Brown family also were concerned about Eddie's health. When he returned from Colorado Springs, the local newspaper wrote: "If the good wishes and prayers of his many friends could be realized, friend Eddie would speedily be restored to perfect health" (*Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner* 1892a:1). In helping the Brown family solve its problem, the community was protecting its own families, too. There were no disinterested bystanders in this agricultural town of less than a thousand people. Theirs was a community where consensus took priority over rules administered by outside officials. The family and neighbors would consult to decide on a course of action.

Brown was "besieged on all sides by a number of people, who expressed implicit faith in the old theory" (*Providence Journal* 1892a:3). There is no record of their identities, but there is a likely channel of oral tradition for the vampire practice in Exeter that links several generations, consisting of genealogical and social ties. Brown was a member of the Exeter Grange, of which William Rose was elected Worthy Master in 1890; Rose also was a member of the town council. He had exhumed the body of his daughter in 1872 in an attempt to halt the spread of consumption. Rose's wife was Mary Tillinghast Rose, the great-granddaughter of Stukeley Tillinghast, who had several of his children, dead from consumption, exhumed around 1799 (Bell 2001:76–77). When "the old theory" was described to Brown, he likely was repulsed by the idea. Almost certainly he did not believe in its efficacy, for a letter in his home town newspaper reported that "the husband and father of the deceased ones has, from the first, disclaimed any faith at all in the vampire theory" (*Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner* 1892b:5). Even the largely disapproving city newspaper, the *Providence Journal*, acknowledged that Brown had "no confidence in the old-time theory" (*Providence Journal* 1892a:3). But Brown agreed to consider it. He, and perhaps Eddie as well, must have addressed several questions: "Are there any other options?" "What if the 'old theory' really works but we don't try it?" "Should we, can we, turn our backs on our friends and neighbors?" "What do we have to lose if we try it?"

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As head of a household, Brown may have felt a tacit obligation to both his family and community to exhaust every possibility for halting the devastating plague. In his time and place, he was aware of two options, neither appealing. One was to side with the medical establishment, which prognosticated certain death. The other, which Brown apparently considered intellectually implausible, and almost certainly would have found abhorrent in its implementation, offered a possible solution. Brown reluctantly assented to the latter option, but he made it plain that neither he nor Eddie would attend the exhumations. In characterizing Brown's motivation, we would be on firmer ground by substituting for "belief" one or more of the following terms: "hope," "desire," "acquiescence," "assent," "possibility." As Rodney Needham (1972) has argued, these concepts may be related to the concept of belief, but certainly do not require its existence.

In March, a young acquaintance of George Brown informed Dr. Harold Metcalf that Eddie was close to death from consumption. He told the doctor that "several friends and neighbors" were convinced that the bodies of Brown's wife and two daughters must be exhumed and their hearts examined. He said that any heart filled with blood must be destroyed because it was "living on the tissue and blood of Edwin." Dr. Metcalf dismissed the young man, telling him the belief was absurd. The same emissary later returned to tell the doctor that Brown, "though not believing in the superstition himself, desired him to come up to satisfy the neighbors and make an autopsy of the bodies." Metcalf attended the autopsies in his official capacity as the Medical Examiner for the towns of North Kingstown and Exeter (*Providence Journal* 1892c:8).

If we broaden our conception of healing beyond what the biomedical world considers its borders, we might conclude that a family and community were healed even though the patient, Eddie, died. The people's medicine is successful because it "treats the community along with the patient." The patient is not regarded as an autonomous organism requiring a cure, but an "integral part of a folk community." In communities such as Exeter, deaths were "a disturbance of the normal rhythm of life" (Yoder 1972:206) or, as Larkin put it, "rents in the social fabric which concerned far more than the immediate family" (Larkin 1988:99). The practitioner must reunite and heal the broken community. The secondary mortuary rite of exhumation was a means to transcend the loss of a person—grieved for at the primary rite, the funeral—by reinforcing the ongoing social order of the community (Kan 1989:289–290). I have to conclude that George Brown realized what role he was being asked to play and why. He knew that no one else could give his son, his family, and his community (himself included) what they required at that moment. Singled out by circumstance to be a folk healer, he reluctantly assented. For George Brown, it appears to have been a pragmatic decision, not a magical ceremony.

By the time Mercy Brown's heart was cut from her body and burned, in 1892, several significant cultural changes had converged to doom the vampire practice in New England (Bell 2001:260–278). Within a span of 100 years, the biomedical paradigm had consolidated its authority in the realm of medicine, and its rapid and unprecedented dominance overshadowed the medical pluralism that had been the norm, not only for New Englanders but also for most societies throughout history (Fábrega 1997:12–14). A widening rift between the official and folk worlds had developed, at least from the viewpoint of the "civilization establishment" that included scientists, scholars, businessmen,

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clergy, politicians, and practitioners of the dominant biomedical paradigm. Beginning in the 18th century, distinctions among magic, religion, and science became increasingly important to the elite, even though they still meant little to ordinary people, for whom the borders separating medicine and magic, and religion and the occult, were not sharply defined. Where elite, official, and academic cultures began to divide the world into a variety of specialties, with their attendant specialists, the holistic nature of folk culture persisted.

Urban, establishment newspapers, notably the *Providence Journal*, pointed to Mercy's exhumation as evidence that "civilization" had not yet triumphed everywhere and was being threatened by "survivals of primitive thought." Referring to "Deserted Exeter," the *Journal*'s editors wrote that "there are considerable elements of rural population in this part of the country on which the forces of education and civilization have made scarcely any impression." They regarded "the amount of ignorance and superstition to be found in some corners of New England . . . more than surprising" (*Providence Journal* 1892b:4). Viewed from the pedestal of civilization in 1892, the exhumation of Mercy Brown was yet another skirmish in the war between "scientific thinking" and the "primitive, unreflective superstitions inherited from a savage past."

Ten years before Mercy was exhumed, Robert Koch had announced his discovery of the tubercle bacillus. Germ theory became the commonly accepted explanation for the spread of tuberculosis, although not as quickly, easily, and universally as some, including Koch himself, had hoped and expected. With a different theory came a different method of treatment that, until the discovery of streptomycin in 1943, entailed the isolation of the patient. This, and other preventative measures based on the assumption that the germ could be transmitted both directly and indirectly from person to person, led to a steady decline in the incidence of tuberculosis (like the vampire, the term *consumption* also was doomed in white U.S. society). In a world in which the biomedical paradigm has gained overwhelming acceptance, the correlation between contagion and germs is accepted without question and a fear of vampires is considered irrational. But are we not afraid of contagion? What if we believed that death was contagious? Fear of the dead may just express a broader, perhaps more indirect notion of contagion than the one currently holding sway in the biomedical paradigm: one that includes revenants as well as microbes (Barber 1988:37). The significant difference is how the contagion is explained. In any event, by the close of the 19th century, a microorganism labeled *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* had replaced the vampire as contagion's scapegoat.

At the same time that germ theory was winning acceptance, chemical embalming as a mortuary practice was gaining popularity. Between the years of 1856 and 1870, 11 embalming patents were filed with the U.S. Patent Office (Habenstein and Laners 1955:328–329). The Civil War created the necessity of preserving a great number of corpses, often far from desired or convenient sites of interment. The embalming of public figures for their lying in state created a greater popular awareness of the custom (Habenstein and Laners 1962:395). Lincoln's assassination, and the subsequent public viewing of his body as it went by rail from Washington to Illinois, reinforced general acceptance of the two related customs of embalming and public viewing of the corpse. The funeral industry grew rapidly during the 1880s, but, as is the case with many customs, there was a split between city and country. The rural population was slower to accept the expanding role

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of the professional undertaker, which usually included embalming. Earlier in the 19th century, embalming was used as a sanitary measure, particularly during outbreaks of contagious diseases such as smallpox, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and yellow fever. In the latter half of the century, embalming became the socially prestigious choice. In addition to the cosmetic effects of embalming, removal of the blood also renders the corpse inert, preempting, as it were, the creation of a vampire by eliminating the prime constituent. A person who was not dead (by any standard) prior to embalming would be dead (by any standard) after embalming (Barber 1988:84, 174).

By the close of the 19th century in New England, germ theory had become the generally accepted explanation for tuberculosis in white society; embalming and interment by mortuary professionals was the preferred method for treating deceased relatives; and it was widely believed that civilization had won—or was on the verge of winning—the war against superstition. Understandably, vampires disappeared from the New England countryside.

In the vast stretch of human history before the 20th century, disease was an accepted part of life, ever-present and endured. Yet, almost everyone alive in today's industrial states was brought up believing in the inevitable conquest of disease. Vaccines, antibiotics, modern hygiene, and aggressive public health campaigns all but eradicated such feared scourges as tuberculosis, pneumonia, smallpox, polio, and measles. We seemed to be on the way to a disease-free world. Today, however, certain terrible things have shaken our complacency. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria and new infectious enemies, such as AIDS, Ebola, West Nile, and Avian Flu, have appeared and some old ones, particularly tuberculosis and pneumonia, have reemerged. Our microbial adversaries have shown us the vulnerability even of biomedicine. Humbled by our own era's failure to conquer disease, we should acknowledge our affinity with those who endured the fear and uncertainty that tuberculosis embodied in pre-20th-century New England.

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bodies of deceased relatives and check them for signs considered to be extraordinary. For example, liquid, or so-called fresh blood in the heart was taken as a sign that it was the corpse that might be responsible for the continuing plague of consumption. To stem any further spread of the disease, the heart (and, sometimes, other organs) was cut from the body and burned to ashes. Often it was stipulated that the ashes be fed to anyone in the family suffering from consumption. A variant of this practice was to burn the entire corpse, sometimes having those afflicted inhale the smoke.

The most recent and best-documented incident occurred in Exeter, Rhode Island. In December of 1883, the wife of George T. Brown, Mary Eliza, died of consumption. Seven months later, his 20-year-old daughter, Mary Olive, succumbed. Within a few years, his only son, Edwin, was diagnosed with consumption. By then, it was obvious that Brown's 19-year-old daughter, Mercy Lena, also was ill. Her consumption was diagnosed as the "galloping" variety, and she quickly died and was entombed in the family vault on Chestnut Hill in January of 1892.

With no other hope to save his remaining family members, and pressured by friends and neighbors, Brown turned to the folk remedy, even though he reportedly had no faith in its efficacy. On Wednesday, March 17th, 1892, according to the *Providence Journal*:

> four men . . . unearthed the remains of Mrs. Brown. . . . Some of the muscles and flesh still existed in a mummified state, but there were no signs of blood in the heart. The body of the first daughter, [Mary] Olive, was then taken out of the grave, but only a skeleton, with a thick growth of hair, remained.
>
> Finally the body of [Mercy] Lena, the second daughter, was removed from the tomb, where it had been placed till spring. The body was in a fairly well preserved state. . . . The heart and liver were removed, and in cutting open the heart, clotted and decomposed blood was found, which was what might be expected at that stage of decomposition. The liver showed no blood, though it was in a well preserved state. These two organs were removed, and a fire being kindled in the cemetery, they were reduced to ashes, and the attendants seemed satisfied.
>
> The old superstition of the natives of Exeter, and also believed in other farming communities, is . . . that, so long as the heart contains blood, so long will any of the immediate family who are suffering from consumption continue to grow worse; but, if the heart is burned that the patient will get better. And to make the cure certain the ashes of the heart and liver should be eaten by the person afflicted. [1892a:3]

Edwin Brown was said to have drunk the ashes in water shortly thereafter, but to no avail, as he died two months later.

The *Providence Journal*, noting that "all mention of 'the vampire' is omitted from this account" because the local correspondent "failed to get to the bottom of the superstition," placed the Mercy Brown event in the context of European vampire practices by quoting the *Century Dictionary*'s definition of *vampire* as "a kind of spectral being or ghost still possessing a human body, which, according to a superstition existing among the Slavic and other races of the lower Danube, leaves the grave during the night, and maintains a semblance of life by sucking the warm blood of men and women while they are asleep" (*Providence Journal* 1892a:3). Although the procedures employed in New England to identify and dispatch a "vampire" have identical counterparts in Eastern Europe

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(Murgoci 1926), the New England tradition is much less elaborate. Many aspects of vampirism absent in New England are addressed in the European tradition, including why someone is likely to become a vampire, how to ward off a vampire, and what precautions one might take to prevent a person from becoming a vampire (see Dundes 1980). In New England, accounts of the tradition focus on the medical or curative aspects, which are invariably associated with consumption. Supernatural elements connecting the deceased to their dying kin tend to be vague: No credible account describes a corpse actually leaving the grave to suck blood, and there is little evidence to suggest that those involved in the practice referred to it as "vampirism" or to the suspected corpse as a "vampire," although newspaper accounts used this term to refer to the practice. Of course, I must stress here that accounts of these incidents were not made by trained ethnographers, or even by—in most cases, and by any standard of measurement—uninterested parties.

To date, I have identified more than twenty vampire incidents in New England. The documentation that establishes the vampire practice is diverse, including eyewitness accounts, family stories, local legends, newspaper articles, local histories, town records, journal entries, unpublished correspondence, genealogies, gravestones, and even actual human remains (see Bell 2001). The evidence suggests that the vampire practice was not uncommon in certain parts of New England during the late 1700s and throughout the 1800s, a time of significant transformations in the cultural and social fabric of the region. Changing conceptions of illness and death are particularly germane to the interpretation of this practice.

## The Other New England

Early New Englanders accepted a variety of harmful spirits (Dorson 1973:26) and viewed illness as a result of supernatural or irrational causes, ranging from witchcraft to the predestinarian notion that "God causes sickness" (Yoder 1972:204). God and witchcraft were not mutually exclusive. Although many of the Puritans' miraculous "providences" concerned ghosts and revenants, the role of the supernatural was strictly bounded by Puritan orthodoxy. The witchcraft outbreak of 1692 in Salem Village followed a hard winter and an epidemic of smallpox, both of which served as proof, to a self-righteous few, that "a group of witches has allied themselves with Satan to destroy the Church of God and set up the kingdom of the Devil" (Cavendish 1987:118). But this common foundation, linking a contagious disease to supernatural agency, shared by both Puritans and vampire hunters, diverges in context and interpretation. Understanding why the vampire practice took hold in certain parts of New England but not others requires examination of remote areas where vampire accounts appear in the record and alternative world views held sway. John Brooke begins his investigation of the occult in early New England with the observation that "modern scholars have found magic in New England an incoherent jumble because they . . . have viewed it from the perspective of New England's majority culture" (Brooke 1995:108). Historians of this era also have directed most of their attention to this Calvinist-based majority culture, which includes the Puritans (Brooke 1995:124).

The *other* New England, radiating from outlying towns in Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut, occupied geographic and philosophical margins. It extended

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up the Connecticut River Valley into Vermont and New Hampshire, reaching into southern Maine. This territory, surrounding the Puritan lands, includes precisely those areas where a supernatural worldview coexisted with Protestant ideology and, not coincidentally, where the vampire tradition has been documented. The residents of these areas were, in Brooke's words, "close spiritual kin to the sectarians of revolutionary England" (Brooke 1995:109) who

> rejected any connection between church and state, advanced doctrines of a miraculous restitution of the true church and state, advocated free will and universal salvation, and at its extreme announced a perfectionist ideal of human divinity. As the work of Christopher Hill, Keith Thomas, and many others have amply demonstrated, the sectarian theologies of the Radical Reformation and the radical wing of English Revolution accommodated and "perpetuated what we classify as magical or occult beliefs." [1995:108]

These New Englanders were not especially religious in an orthodox sense. Indeed, during the colonial and early national periods, 85 to 90 percent of New England's white population *did not* belong to any church (Quinn 1998:27). Although unchurched, many of these New Englanders were nonetheless spiritual and participated in various hybrid religions that were unofficial combinations of Christian beliefs and folk practices. These other New Englanders experimented with a worldview that tapped into alchemy, astrology, divination, seeing stones, dowsing, and other practices that Puritans viewed as diabolical. Certainly, vampire procedures would have been off-limits, too. But non-Puritan Protestants reconciled such acts in the same way that they could, with equal ease and no apparent contradiction, consult bibles and preachers as well as almanacs and astrologers. For them, as Brooke noted,

> the relationship between religion and the occult was more symbiotic and less contested; . . . the occult generated not court testimony and executions, but quiet routine and continuity. It is even possible to go so far as to propose that the sectarian environment acted as a reservoir for much of the fragmentary occult floating around 17th- and 18th-century New England. [1995:109]

This other New England was the heartland of the Quakers and Shakers and the source of later religious sects, such as the Mormons and the Oneida Community (both of whose founders were from Vermont), that developed in central New York's "Burned-over District," so named because of its successive waves of unorthodox religious and spiritual movements based on idiosyncratic interpretations of Protestantism and imbued with an appealing supernaturalism.

The magical worldview crosscut social distinctions, including class, religion, and ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Along with the home remedies and supernatural lore that had been handed down in their own families and communities, people encountered the traditions of other groups. Brooke describes how "a series of cunning folk, born in the folds of sectarian religion," carried the occult tradition into the 19th century (Brooke 1995:120). The prevailing, general interest in supernatural topics is recorded, for example, in newspaper advertisements that show itinerant lecturers, many originally from Germany and Eastern Europe, making the circuit from New Jersey and Pennsylvania into New England. Although this culture has received scant attention from historians, it appears to have touched many, if not most, Americans prior to the early 1800s. In his examination

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of the New England roots of early Mormonism, D. Michael Quinn acknowledges that "without statistical sampling and opinion polls, it is impossible to know the actual extent of occult beliefs and magic practices among Americans during any time period." Even so, Quinn argues that

> anti-occult rhetoric by early American opinion-makers (clergy, legislators, jurists, newspaper editors, book authors) may have been the embattled effort of an *elite minority* to convert a vastly larger populace that was sympathetic to the occult. . . . At any rate, literary sources and material culture show that occult beliefs and folk magic had widespread manifestations among educated and religious Americans from colonial times to the eve of the 20th century. [Quinn 1998:xiv]

A tantalizing inkling of this regard for the occult makes a subtle appearance in the official records of Cumberland, Rhode Island. Following is a transcription of the entry for the Town Council meeting of February 8, 1796:

> Mr Stephen Staples of Cumberland appeared before This Council and Prayed that he Might have Liberty Granted unto him to Dig up the body of his Dofter [*sic*] Abigail Staples Late of Cumberland Single Woman Deceased In order to Try an Experiment on Livina Chace Wife of Stephen Chace Which Said Livina Was Sister to the Said Abigail Deceased Which being Duly Considered it is Voted and Resolved that the Said Stephen Staples have Liberty to Dig up the Body of the Said Abigail Deceased and after Trying the Experiment as aforesaid that he bury the Body of the Said Abigail In a Deasent Manner. [1796:1]

Although those unfamiliar with New England's vampire tradition might be puzzled by this entry, the etymology of the word *experiment* points toward a solution and strengthens the vampire interpretation. From the Latin *experimentum* ("a trial, test") through Old French, the word entered English as a magician's term, often used interchangeably with *magic*. As late as the 17th century, according to Lynn Thorndike, "Medical cases and prescriptions were still spoken of as experiments" (Thorndike 1953:702). The Cumberland entry suggests that exhumation for medical purposes was not entirely marginalized and could even be incorporated into the official social fabric of some communities (see Bell 2001:205–208, 253–255).

## Sickness and Healing

American medicine in 1784, the year of the first documented vampire incident in New England, was in a state of uncertainty and transition. The eclectic mixture of approaches based on astrology, religion, and folk cures provided alternative ways of dealing with sickness and healing as empirical, lay, indigenous, and magicoreligious traditions coexisted, often competing. The ancient Greek doctrine advanced by Hippocrates remained unchallenged: The human body was regulated by the interplay of the four "humors" of phlegm, choler, bile, and blood. To restore balance and good health when these fluids or vapors got out of balance, doctors would purge the digestive tract with cathartics and emetics or bleed the patient. The concept of "vitalism" posited that blood, the "paramount humor," contained the essence, or vital spirit, of the creature in which it flowed (Starr 1998:5).

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Until well into the 19th century in New England, a physician's duties were inclusive, requiring little, if any, formal training. New Englanders had long relied on self-treatment and treatment by lay healers, employing mainly herbs and readily available household ingredients. Itinerant healers also worked the circuit. They set up shop in town, advertised in local newspapers and broadsides (most of their ads included testimonies from cured patients), and moved on when business dropped off or, not infrequently, when run out of town by officials or dissatisfied clients. The following list of self-proclaimed specialties suggests the inclusive and unsettled nature of the healing profession throughout America in the 18th and 19th centuries: physicians, surgeons, oculists, aurists, bonesetters, animal healers, botanic-Indian healers, pharmaceutical peddlers, medical electricians and apparatus healers, cancer curers, and dentists and surgeon-dentists (Benes 1992:109–111). Whether treated or not, illnesses ran their natural course and most of the afflicted survived (Estes 1992:114).

But consumption was an exceptional affliction. A disease that ebbed and flowed for thousands of years, it reached epidemic proportions in the early 18th century and remained the leading cause of death throughout that century and the next (Dubos and Dubos 1952:9–10; Rothman 1994:2). The symptoms of consumption progressed from a suspicious cough to the recurring hemorrhages that signaled certain death. Difficulty in diagnosing the disease facilitated its transmission and also led to identifying the "galloping" variety that many, including Mercy Brown of Exeter, Rhode Island, were supposed to have contracted. A person could live a normal life, with little evidence of disease, right up to the final months or even weeks. Out of sight, the disease often worked slowly yet inexorably to destroy its host over a period of years, alarming observers at the apparent swiftness of its course when it finally became manifest (Dubos and Dubos 1952:205).

Projecting their own predilections, as well as reflecting the attitudes of society at large, doctors, moralists and reformers of the era offered a variety of explanations for how one acquired the disease (Sontag 1978:58–59). Overindulgence (in sex, food, drink, or tobacco), unconventional behavior, lack of exercise, and even "a passion for dancing" were singled out as causes for consumption (Dubos and Dubos 1952:197). In 1892, the year of the last documented vampire exhumation in New England, a physician wrote that the constitutional predisposition to tuberculosis "appears to be built up with equal certainty by impure air, drunkenness, and want among the poor, and by dissipation and enervating luxuries among the rich" (Dubos and Dubos 1952:197). Pragmatic physicians looked to the environment rather than behavior, arguing that living in cold and damp places was the major cause (Bowditch 1977; Baron 1882). The kinds of treatments offered were at least as varied as, and even more numerous than, the supposed causes. Under the heading "Therapeutics" in the index to a recent book on the history of tuberculosis, the following subheadings are, themselves, an index to the various approaches for treating the disease: bleeding, blistering, climatology, diet, drug regimens, exercise, leeching, open-air treatment, open health resorts, opium, poultices, purgatives and emetics, rest cure, sanatoriums, voyages for health (Rothman 1994:317). Treatment may have imparted a sense of control to both physicians and patients, but, in the end, none of the treatments was able to stem the rising tide of tuberculosis.

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## Death

At the crux of New England's vampire tradition is the relationship between the impermanent and the eternal aspects of a human being, an examination of which introduces a number of other issues that ultimately hinge on the definition of death itself. Margaret Lock's discussion in *Twice Dead* is particularly illuminating. Lock states that, in the early 19th century, a definition of *death* as the point at which the heart and lungs cease to function (i.e., the cardiopulmonary standard) began to displace "an older belief in putrefaction as the definitive sign of death" (Lock 2002:41). The older conception persisted into the beginning of the 20th century, however, as "eminent practitioners continued to have doubts about their ability to objectively assess death and insisted that 'nothing short of putrefaction could distinguish death from life'" (Lock 2002:66).

Although Lock's book is focused on modern issues concerning the demarcation of death in relation to organ transplants, her discussion demonstrates the return of the ambiguities that bedeviled early New Englanders. Like the vampires themselves, some questions do not rest easy. Where is the locus of life, the seat of the soul, the place of personhood? Lock's observation that, "For several centuries, the heart was usually . . . understood as the organ that governed human life and all vital principles" (Lock 2002:74) distinguishes a necessary foundation for New England's vampire practice: the heart's blood (see Leatherdale 1985:15). The power of blood is derived from its association with life itself. Direct observation informed people that if one lost enough blood, one died. Thus, if blood itself is not life, it must contain its essence, soul, or spirit, which explains why people believed that it was craved by the dead or undead. If blood was life, then the heart was its home. The bright red blood from a consumptive's lung hemorrhages was said to be from the heart that, in folk speech, signifies center, essence, soul, and courage. A commonplace phrase that appears in European and American balladry is "heart's blood," a combining of the two traditional locations of soul and power to signify the very essence of a person's life. In a traditional ballad, after the young Sir Hugh is stabbed with a penknife:

> Then out and cam the thick, thick, blood,
> Then out and cam the thin,
> Then out and cam the bonny heart's blood
> Where a' the life lay in. [Hodgart 1962:125]

The existence of liquid blood in the heart of an exhumed corpse was viewed as unnatural, because it was interpreted as "fresh" blood. A widespread folk principle underlying many customary beliefs and practices presumes that blood in its liquid state proclaims the presence of life. "Liquid is life" goes back at least to the Greek conception of life as the "gradual diminishing of liquid inside a man." A decomposed corpse is dry, indicating that the corpse is inert and death is complete (Dundes 1980:102). But a corpse that has not sufficiently dried—one with liquid blood remaining in the heart, or one that seemed supple and had not stiffened, for example—would be viewed as incompletely dead. Through ordinary observation, people understood that blood coagulates following death; few, however, were aware of the processes of decomposition that occur after inhumation and that, depending on the circumstances of death,

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blood can reliquefy naturally (Barber 1988:114). Burning the heart or the entire corpse hastens the drying process, removing life's liquid. One area of agreement between pre-20th-century vampire hunters and physicians in New England was that putrefaction was the key for defining death.

Contemporary Americans might look back to the 18th and 19th centuries and see an enormous gap in knowledge, yet "the complexities of unresolvable questions about the determination of death" continue (Lock 2002:74). A recent article in the *Lancet* by Powner and others, summarized by Lock, identifies the current dilemma:

> Does the "vital principle" of life reside in, or is it produced by, a single organ or part of a single organ . . . or is the "soul" represented throughout all organs, tissues, or cells? That is, does death occur and unique "personhood" end when a small number of organs, or perhaps only one, permanently cease(s) to function, or must the entire organism go through such a process before death is defined? [2002:74]

A byproduct of the medical profession's inability to successfully treat tuberculosis prior to this century was the perpetuation of the ambiguous vampire figure, the living dead. D. J. Powner and his colleagues assert that a different sort of failure by the biomedical paradigm has reintroduced the ambiguity of the living dead. In Lock's words,

> These authors conclude that these fundamental issues remain unresolved because key concepts that we recognize as life, such as personhood, cannot be measured by medical devices. The work of doctors in the early 20th century to medicalize death and make foolproof its assessment have not withstood the test of time or the invention of the artificial ventilator. [Lock 2002:75]

Referring to the current concept of brain death, Lock remarks, "The new death, with its ambiguous figure of the living cadaver, has rekindled doubts about error and premature declarations of death" (2002:75). She concludes her discussion of "locating biological death" with an eerie evocation of ancient apprehensions:

> Concern about "bad" deaths—those that are unnatural, accidental, or untimely, or repugnant—is a universal, age-old preoccupation. Technologically orchestrated deaths appear intuitively to many people to be unnatural. We worry that individuals who die bad deaths suffer unduly, and, even though most of us consider such thoughts irrational, even some health-care practitioners may be harrowed by the idea that this suffering will come back to haunt the living. [Lock 2002:75]

In response to the current ambiguity and controversy surrounding the concept of "brain death," some physicians have advocated a return to the traditional cardiopulmonary standard, arguing from the position that death is a biological event rather than a process requiring social consensus. Neurologist Robert Taylor, for example, asserts that the proper biological definition of "death" is "the event that separates the process of dying from the process of disintegration" and that, therefore, the "proper criterion" of death is the "permanent cessation of the circulation of blood" (Lock 2002:358–359). This formulation is implicit in the vampire hunters' search for liquid blood in the heart, taken as evidence that "fresh" blood was still flowing and death was incomplete.

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**Consumption and Vampires**

Even granting the existence of an undead corpse intent on harming the living, by what means would it be able to infect them with consumption? The records that document these events do not explicate such associations with any precision, perhaps indicating that the cultural information system defining this ritual did not require empirical validation as the biomedical paradigm does (see Leaf 2004). The several documents that do address this question allude to vague occult connections, suggesting that consumption was conceived to be a spiritual visitation rather than a disease (or biomedically defined pathology), as the following examples suggest:

> In New England the vampire superstition is unknown by its proper name. It is believed that consumption is not a physical but a spiritual disease, obsession, or visitation; that as long as the body of a dead consumptive relative has blood in its heart it is proof that an occult influence steals from it for death and is at work draining the blood of the living into the heart of the dead and causing his rapid decline. [Stetson 1896:3]

> In northern Rhode Island those who die of consumption are believed to be victims of vampires who work by charm, draining the blood by slow draughts as they lie in their graves. . . . If he died with blood in his heart he has this power of nightly resurrection. [Skinner 1896:76–77]

> [The bodies of two brothers were disinterred and burned] because the dead were supposed to feed upon the living, and that so long as the dead body in the grave remained in a state of decomposition, either wholly or in part, the surviving members of the family must continue to furnish the sustenance on which the dead body fed. [*Norwich Weekly Courier* 1854:2]

> The old superstition . . . is that the vital organs of the dead still retain a certain flicker of vitality and by some strange process absorb the vital forces of the living. [Cole 1888:499]

> The body of a person who died of a consumption, was by some supernatural means, nourished in the grave by some living member of the family; and that during the life of this person, the body [retained] in the grave all the fullness and freshness of life and health. [*Plymouth County Advertiser* 1822:4]

> They took out the liver, heart, and lungs . . . and burned them to ashes on the blacksmith's forge of Jacob Mead. Timothy Mead officiated at the altar in the sacrifice to the Demon Vampire who it was believed was still sucking the blood of the then living wife of Captain Burton. [Pettibone 1930:158]

In contrast to the examples above, those below reveal a down-to-earth tone, focused on curing a disease rather than exorcising a demon, and hint at a Yankee pragmatism that seeks the bottom line:

> If the lungs of a brother or sister who died of consumption be burned, the ashes will cure the living members of the family affected with that disease. [Currier 1891:253]

> There seemed to be a curious idea . . . that by cremating or burning the remains of a departed friend or relative while the living relatives stood around and inhaled the smoke from the burning remains, that it would eradicate the disease from the systems of the living and restore them to health. [Tyler 1892:4]

The record of an incident in Woodstock, Vermont, suggests that consumption could be caused by either ordinary *or* supernatural agencies. The diagnostic procedure was to check the condition of the deceased's heart:

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# Vampires, zombies and Frankenstein: Gothic history in pictures

*Saturday 11th October 2014*

historyextra.com

Since the publication of the first Gothic novel in 1764, gothic literature has influenced nearly all aspects of popular culture – film, fashion, music and art. Now, 250 years on, a new exhibition exploring the roots of Gothic culture has opened at the British Library



*The Bride of Frankenstein, 1939 © Universal/The Kobal Collection*

The UK's largest display of Gothic literature, 'Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination' celebrates how British writers have pioneered the genre. On show alongside the manuscripts of classic novels such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* is a vampire slaying kit, the Wallace and Gromit Were-Rabbit, and Stanley Kubrick's annotated typescript of *The Shining*.

The exhibition, which runs until 20 January 2015, also showcases Clive Barker's original film script and sketches for *Hellraiser*, and Alexander McQueen's iconic Gothic catwalk creations.

Here, we bring you some of the highlights:



*Alarm clock, c1840–1900. Science Museum, London © Science Museum / Science & Society Picture Library*

*Alarm clock, c1840–1900. Science Museum, London © Science Museum/Science & Society Picture Library*



*Julie Harris, costume design*

*Julie Harris, costume design for Dracula, (1979). On loan from the BFI National Archive*

*First illustration of Frankenstein's*

for Dracula, (1979). On loan from the BFI National Archive

*monster. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus. London, 1831. Photography courtsey of British Library.*



*First illustration of Frankenstein's monster. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus. London, 1831. Photography courtsey of British Library.*



*'Dear Boss' letter, signed by someone claiming to be Jack the Ripper and sent to the Central News Agency in September 1888. © The National Archives*

*'Dear Boss' letter, signed by someone claiming to be Jack the Ripper and sent to the Central News Agency in September 1888.* © The National Archives

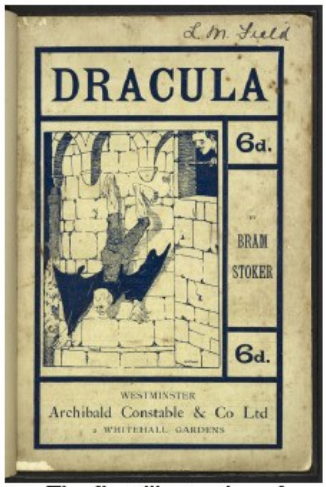
*Victorian vampire hunting kit © Royal Armouries (XII.11811)*

*The first illustration of Dracula, from Bram Stoker's Dracula. Leeds, 1901. Photo courtesy of British Library.*

*Early illustration of a female vampire, which inspired Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The Vampire'. Rudyard Kipling, New York, 1899.*



*Victorian vampire hunting kit © Royal Armouries (XII.11811)*




*The first illustration of Dracula, from Bram Stoker's Dracula. Leeds, 1901. Photo courtesy of British Library.*

*An early illustration of a 'wicker man' from Nathaniel Spencer's The Complete English Traveller, 1771 © British Library*

*Board*

*Fuseli's suitably Gothicized image of the ghost of Hamlet's father in Boydell's Shakespeare. Photograph courtesy of the British Library*



*Early illustration of a female vampire, which inspired Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The Vampire'. Rudyard Kipling, New York, 1899.*



*Still from The Wicker Man, 1973 © StudioCanal Films Ltd. All rights reserved/The Kobal Collection*

*Scott MacGregor, set designs for Scars of Dracula, (c1970). On loan from the BFI National Archive*



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# Vampires, ghosts and demons: the nightmare of sleep paralysis

*David Cox*
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theguardian.com

## Vampires, ghosts and demons: the nightmare of sleep paralysis

Tales of things that go bump in the night have existed for centuries, but they may in fact be part of a surprisingly common neurological phenomenon



*In addition to paralysis, some people see ghosts, demons, aliens or even figments from their past, just as in John Henry Fuseli's The Nightmare, above. Photograph: UniversalImagesGroup/Getty Images*

It's known as "Ghost Depression" in China, "Kanashibari" in Japan, meaning to be bound or fastened by metal strips, and "Karabasan" or 'The Dark Presser' in Turkey. The latter sounds oddly like a 1980s metal band, but these three terms all refer to the same thing – the often terrifying and little understood ordeal of sleep paralysis, which is believed to have left various imprints on our culture throughout the millennia, from tales of ghosts in the night to visits from aliens.

Over the past few months, sleep paralysis has made its way to the big screen for the first time in the shape of new docu-drama The Nightmare. With the help of a variety of special effects, director Rodney Ascher brings to life the often terrifying bedtime experiences suffered by individuals around the world. And they're more common than you might think. Studies suggest that around 8% of the general population, 28% of students and 32% of psychiatric patients have experienced sleep paralysis at least once.

"It's happened to me quite a few times," says Santi, a 25-year-old civil engineer. "It feels like you're awake but at the same time you know you're asleep. Some things seem a bit weird and you can't move. Some people say that it feels like somebody's pinning you down. I had one experience when I could see the landing of the stairs from my bed and I had this feeling there was a big, black dog there. And because you're paralysed you often feel quite paranoid. Another time, I remember feeling convinced that someone was coming to get me and I needed to wake up as soon as possible. But I couldn't."

Santi describes his experiences of sleep paralysis as distinctly unpleasant and comfortable, but compared to other anecdotes, they're relatively mild.

"I had one patient who was lying in bed and woke up to see a little vampire girl with blood coming out of her mouth," says Brian Sharpless, a clinical psychologist at Washington State University and author of the book, Sleep Paralysis: Historical, Psychological, and Medical Perspectives. "This is an example of a really vivid, multi-sensory hallucination. She could feel



this vampire figure grabbing onto her arms, pulling her, and saying she was going to drag her to hell and do all these terrible things to her."

But what exactly is sleep paralysis, and why does it occur?

Sleep may appear a very natural part of our existence, but in reality it's a highly complex and subtle neurological process with a lot of room for stuff to go wrong, both as we're going to sleep and as we're waking up. Things can misfire due to a variety of reasons ranging from jetlag, unusual sleep patterns, anxiety, trauma, to alcohol or other substances which suppress the period known as REM or deep sleep. Suppressing REM means that instead of this period of the sleep cycle occurring at the beginning of the night, it rebounds towards the end as your brain tries to make up for the lost REM time. But this can provide the trigger for an odd sequence of events.

REM is when we experience our most vivid dreams and during this spell, the brain sends your body into a state of complete paralysis. This is a perfectly normal event which occurs every night and we believe it's a mechanism to prevent us from acting out our dreams which could be highly dangerous. But when sleep goes wrong, you can actually wake up during the REM period, while your body is still paralysed.

Many people who suffer from these abnormal occurrences only experience paralysis. But because they are both awake and still in the REM stage of sleep, some will begin hallucinating with their eyes open, projecting vivid and often threatening dreams into their bedroom surroundings.

"Imagine this scenario where you wake up and find you're paralysed," says Baland Jalal, a neuroscientist at the University of California. "Naturally you panic and try to move and so your motor cortex in the brain starts firing and sending all these signals to your limbs. But nothing's coming back because you're trapped in this temporary state, and so your brain has no perceptive feedback to create a sense of what your body looks like. This leads to a distortion of your sense of self, and so you might have an out of body experience, or you might see various shapes appear which are actually disfigured versions of you."

Trapped in this semi-wakened state, with shadowy figures filling the room, anxiety levels understandably peak. "You have this vague sense that there's something in the room with you," Sharpless says. "You feel a bit like a prey animal. It's like walking alone through Soho late at night: you sense that someone might be watching you."

It's a terrifying situation, and as your confused brain desperately tries to interpret the array of signals it's receiving, it can insert cultural beliefs or memories into the situation. "Adding original features, scenarios or stories to try and make sense of what you're experiencing is a

very human thing to do," Jalal says. "And this is why people see ghosts, demons, aliens or even figments from their past appearing to attack them."



**'A dark presence squats on my chest': the waking nightmare of sleep paralysis**

In the new documentary The Nightmare, viewers witness the horror of sleep paralysis – a terrifying, hallucinatory disorder that torments around 10% of the population

It's very common to work memories or adaptations of past events into ordinary dreaming, especially when they have powerful emotional connections, something Sigmund Freud called "the day's residue" of the dream. But when this coincides with sleep paralysis, the consequences can be highly disturbing.

One study from Harvard University looked at Cambodian refugees who fled the Khmer Rouge and subsequently suffered from sleep paralysis many years later. Many found themselves vividly reliving their experiences through their hallucinations. Sharpless is currently treating a group of college students whose first sleep paralysis episode occurred after experiencing the death of a grandparent. "Because that person is very much in their thoughts, their mind has often worked the dead relative into the scenario which is really traumatic," he says.

In many cultures, humanity's attempts over the centuries to seek explanations, have led to deep- held superstitions about witches and dark magic. Such fairytales act as a primer for the hallucinations.

"It creates a positive feedback loop," Jalal explains. "So you've grown up being told by your grandmother that spirits and demons inhabit your village after dark. You wake up during REM sleep, you see some kind of a shadow, and you starting panicking, creating more body image hallucinations which your mind interprets in this cultural narrative and so you perceive a demon coming towards you. And then you go to bed the next night even more afraid, so it happens again, and you perhaps start to believe you're possessed."

This is thought to be why sleep paralysis is a far more common occurrence in parts of the world where many of these cultural explanations regarding the supernatural still exist.

Once movement returns to the body, the hallucinations disappear almost immediately. The length of the whole episode can last from a few seconds to 20 minutes. Scientists believe that sleep paralysis may be behind many of the medieval folklore narratives describing vampires and ghosts terrorizing villages at night, before suddenly vanishing into the ether.

Such stories stretch back almost to the start of recorded history, but the earliest attempts to

seriously define the experience of sleep paralysis, were made by the Greek physician Paulus Aegineta in the 7th century AD.

Aegineta coined the name *pan ephialtes*, believing it to be the work of Pan, the faun-like God of nature and the wild, leaping upon the chest of his unfortunate victim. Anglo-Saxon England was more preoccupied by the idea of witches descending onto the helpless sleepers trapped in their beds, a concept which entered our lexicon through the word “haggard”, meaning to be “ridden by the hag”.

“It seems to be a major part of culture going back through time,” Sharpless says. “And that’s pretty understandable. I mean, how would you explain it in a pre-scientific world? You go to bed and you wake up and you see a shadowy figure hovering on top of you, doing things to you.”

But while sleep paralysis affects a surprising number of people worldwide, for the majority it remains a freaky, one-off. As a result, there is yet to be a single randomised clinical trial of either medications or psychotherapy for the treatment of sleep paralysis.

For those who experience it as a recurring problem, psychologists have a few simple tips which can help. These include trying to establish a more regular sleep cycle and avoiding sleeping on your back or stomach. “People are statistically less likely to have it, if they sleep on their side,” Sharpless says. “We think there’s something about the extra weight when we’re in a supine position that makes it more likely.”

Jalal is currently working on a novel, direct treatment, but from experience he’s found that simply educating people about the real causes can take away much of the anxiety which is prompting them to persistently waken during REM sleep.

“People don’t tend to make the supernatural attributions anymore but their experiences have such a vivid quality, they tend to think there’s something deeply wrong with them,” Jalal says. “And these days it seems to be more palatable to put it down to extra-terrestrials.”

A 2012 National Geographic survey found that up to 77% of Americans believe there are signs that aliens have visited the Earth and a 2008 poll suggested that 55% are convinced they have had an alien abduction experience.

Perhaps sleep paralysis could be at the root of these findings? “It may well be,” Jalal says. “It’s these cultural explanations which embed themselves into the whole experience. And because it seems so real, it encourages these pockets of beliefs to spread.”

Loading comments… Trouble loading?



• bia bailey
4d ago
0 1

Can sleep study identify persons with sleep paralysis? Or neuro?
Thanks



MythicalMagpie bia bailey
4d ago
0 1

I think everyone gets sleep paralysis. It's only a problem if you are awake when it happens.



Gantsara bia bailey
3d ago
0 1

It is associated with sleep apnea I believe, which can be detected by a sleep study.

Cassid58
4d ago
7 8

I have this. It took years and a frightening nighttime childhood to come to grips with it. Once I thought the devil on me. Other times I see snakes ir spiders. For once I'd like to wake up paralyzed with a super model on me. But no, just the scary shit.



Mary Kelly Cassid58
4d ago
1 2

You blew my theory. It was why is it only scary people holding you down. Why not a giant spider or a fish, or some other non humanoid creature? Well, back to the drawing board. P.S. I hear a succubus can be nice.....at first 8)



MythicalMagpie
4d ago
2 3

I occasionally get hypnic jerks on waking and those are bad enough. The dog seems to have less rigorous sleep paralysis. It paddles its legs in its sleep. I wonder if sleep paralysis is well developed in people because our ancestors used to nest in trees?

allofasudden
4d ago
2 3

I never knew this happened to other people, and I feel reassured to hear that it does. It's terrifying.

It started in high school after an incident during a seance that went "dark", and for years I would have out of body experiences at night / early morning where I'd see my body in bed from up on the ceiling, or feel like I whooshing backwards out of bed and through

the house, being taken by something very evil. And I can't move.

I was once on a subway in New York where a man pulled out a gun and everyone panicked. I went cold with fear. This is much worse. It leaves me with a horribly disconnected feeling during the day afterwards.

I began to recognize that it tends to happen more if I'm sleeping in. Thankfully after maybe 30 years of this it has gone from maybe 7 - 8 times a year to once.



• Matthew William Benson
3d ago
2 3

How about the tripping sensation - early in sleep I sometimes imagine I'm, say, stepping off a kerb, and there is this feeling a bit like I am falling over - quite short - and it normally wakes me. Not all that frequent, but very vivid



◦ RedPanda Matthew William Benson
3d ago
1 2

I've had that-- usually starting to go down stairs.



◦ Martin Ashton Matthew William Benson
3d ago
1 2

Hypnagogic jerk or hypnic jerk as it's known.



• pseudospinhalf
3d ago
1 2

I'm surprised they haven't managed to study it properly. I worked out it only happened when I slept on my back and eventually could bring it on at will - fortunately I was also able to shake myself out of it just before it really got started.

Never sleep on my back anymore, and I never sleep on an aeroplane either.



• CivilDiscussion
3d ago
1 2

You can convince yourself there are no demons, witches, ghosts, vampires etc., and chalk it all up to brain science. But I doubt it.

• Mackname
3d ago

0 1

Some relate this phenomenon to some unidentified and paranormal causes.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baaef8MpMXw

However, there are those who suggest that having nightmares might indeed be related to an early warning sign of neurological diseases and disorders.
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/news/8003502/Severe-nightmares-could-be-a-warning-sign-of-Parkinsons.html

The one major problem however, might be that apparently; almost all the suggestions are based on hypothesis rather than scientific findings.



• Gantsara
3d ago
0 1

I've had this twice, but strangely both times on the first night of stays at a particular hotel.

• mattthorn
3d ago
1 2

I had this once years ago but it wasn't something I would want to experience again. I didn't realise until I read this articlethough it was a common phenomenon

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by **Dylan Thuras** / 03 Oct 2011

***31 Days of Halloween:*** *On Atlas Obscura this month, every day is Halloween. Stop by the blog every day this month for true tales of the unquiet dead. Come for the severed heads, stay for the book bound in human skin. Every story is true, and each one is a real place you can visit. We dare you.*



*Highgate Cemetery Angel in London*

***Today we are inspired by one of London's most famous cemeteries and a bizarre period in its history, when it became the stage for dueling magicians, a roving vampire, and mobs of stake-carrying "vampire hunters." Welcome to Highgate Cemetery in the 1970s.***

For a long time, anyone who was anyone wanted to be buried in London's fashionable Highgate Cemetery. Filled with the famous dead - Marx the most famous among them - Highgate is built in the classic Victorian style. (Think weeping angels.)

But by the 1940s, the cemetery had fallen into disrepair and become overgrown and covered in vines giving it an iconic "haunted" look. (Helped no doubt by the fact that a number of Hammer Horror films were shot here in the 1960s.) But it was in the 1970s that the cemetery turned into the backdrop for a truly bizarre scene, involving dueling magicians, hordes of stake carrying vampire hunters, and left a trail of unearthed bodies in its wake. (Photo Source for above.)



In the 1970s the US and the UK were alive with an interest - and terror of - the occult. Astronomy was everywhere, bands like Black Sabbath ruled the airwaves, and films like the Exorcist were frightening teens everywhere. It was against these backdrop that a sort of media mass - hysteria took hold of the UK.

Though the details are a bit murky, it began with reports of a "creature" in the graveyard. The story was likely generated by one of the two main players in the incident magicians / exorcists / full-on maniacs Seán Manchester

*Highgate Cemetery in London*

and David Farrant. Eventually the story became that it was a vampire (a Transylvanian prince brought to the cemetery in the 1800s) and Manchester and Farrant both vowed to hunt down and kill the beast. (They also pronounced each other charlatans.)

As described in the (not to be fully trusted) book *Beyond the Grave,* "many claimed to see a particular creature hovering over the graves. Scores of 'vampire hunters' regularly converged on the graveyard in the dead of night. Tombs were broken open and bodies were mutilated with wooden stakes driven into their chests. These stolen corpses, turning up in strange places, continuously startled local residents. One horrified neighbor to the cemetery discovered a headless body propped behind the steering wheel of his car one morning!" (Photo source for below)



*Highgate Cemetery in London*

Farrant, playing the part of the dark magian, appeared on the cover of a local newspaper next to a naked girl and promising to sacrifice a cat to rid the cemetery of the vampire, saying “Blood must be spilled, but the cat will be anesthetized.” Meanwhile, Manchester played the "good" magician, saying “My opponent intends to raise a demon to destroy me by killing a cat - I will be relying solely on divine power.”

Eventually Sean Manchester announced an official vampire hunt, and according to Wikipedia, on Friday the 13th, "a mob of 'hunters' from all over London swarmed over gates and walls into the locked cemetery, despite police efforts to control them." Though the two magicians were set to "duel" in the cemetery, it never took place. (Photo Source for Below.)


*Highgate Cemetery in London*

Eventually Farrant was arrested when found in the churchyard next to Highgate Cemetery with a crucifix and a wooden stake, and in 1974 was jailed "for damaging memorials and interfering with dead remains in Highgate Cemetery." Though neither magician ever found the supposed vampire, real graves were ransacked and real corpses staked and beheaded in the search.

The debate between Farrant and Manchester continues to this day, while the cemetery remains a popular location for occult, paranormal and vampiric enthusiasts.

**Vampirologists are a thing? - Star Local: As The Locals Do**



Dracula

**Vampirologists are a thing?**

Baylor professor discusses his fascination with vampires

- Story

*Professor J. Gordon Melton*

Posted: Tuesday, October 27, 2015 11:43 am | *Updated: 11:54 am, Tue Oct 27, 2015.*

Vampirologists are a thing? |





kdiggs

- Posted on Oct 27, 2015

by *Kimberly Diggs*

Bloated and rosy-cheeked, sallow with long fingernails, fangs and foul breath, sexy and young, cuddly and goofy a la Grandpa Munster, melancholy and conflicted — vampires have been all of this and more since they emerged on the ghoulish scene centuries ago.

As a teen, Baylor University scholar J. Gordon Melton, was transfixed by science fiction — until he discovered vampires. Decades later, he wrote The Vampire Book: Encyclopedia of the Undead. He has a collection of thousands of vampire books, vampire comic books, vampire DVDs, vampire playscripts and poetry, and sundry other vampire-abilia, much of it locked away in a bank vault with security to rival that of Dracula's crypt.

Lest anyone think his encyclopedia was a one-hit wonder about the undead, be advised that Melton — who also researches religious traditions, new and alternative religions and parapsychology — recently published "The Vampire in Folklore, History, Literature, Film and Television: A Comprehensive Bibliography."

As Halloween approaches, the prolific author and Distinguished Professor in Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion shares his infinite knowledge of the garlic-hating despisers of sunlight.

**Q:** I can see being fascinated by vampires, but how did you get absorbed enough to be a collector and vampirologist?

**A:** When I was young, I was buying vampire books, and they just never got thrown away. I got even more interested when Hammer Horror Films, a British company, decided to do a Dracula film shot in color instead of black and white. That made Christopher Lee into a superstar with “The Horror of Dracula” in 1958. Because of that, they made six sequels. In the last one, Christopher Lee had almost no lines because he was paid by the line and was so expensive. They couldn’t afford him anymore.

Years later, in the 1990s, I was working with Gale Research, and they called me in to do my contract and asked if there was anything else I’d like to do. This was about the time when Francis Ford Coppola’s “Dracula” with Gary Oldman came out, and academic studies of vampires were heating up. I gave them my list, and the last item was a vampire encyclopedia. They pounced on it. That’s the only time I’ve seen one of my books in a bookstore window.

**Q:** What is some of the history/folklore behind vampires?

**A:** One story in folk culture was that mothers who lost their babies during childbirth or soon after, and they preyed on the babies of others. Maybe that was inspired by crib death. The women were usually also considered witches. The first written account was in a Greek manuscript from North Africa, and you find those stories in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. In Eastern Europe, you had written accounts of unusual births and deaths — something like a caul over a baby’s face or a birthmark — and someone, almost invariably a man — dying away from the village or accidentally, or maybe off in a war and without a wake. In some places, where it was very cold and the ground was hard, someone might be buried quickly in a shallow grave or placed in an icehouse and re-buried later. In Western Europe, if they looked at the body and the flesh was still there, they’d think “That’s a holy person.” But in Eastern Europe, if you went back and the flesh was still there, that was considered an unholy person.

**Q:** Some people think that certain movie vampires are attractive — Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt. And then there’s the Dracula movie in which Frank Langella is crawling down that wall toward the window . . .

**A:** That’s part of the appeal. Up until the 1960s, much of what we repressed was our sexuality. Ninety percent of the letters Bela Lugosi got were from women. Same thing with Christopher Lee. Frank Langella is the full-blown romantic hero. Then came Gary Oldman, the seducer.

A side note is that in Eastern Europe, if your husband died, you were supposed to be in mourning for a year. So what happens if six months later you turn up pregnant? “Vampires” were used to cover up affairs. And the child, rather than being regarded as a bastard vampire and half vampire, was viewed as a vampire hunter. That gives you special status.

**Q:** Tell me about your collection of vampire things.

**A:** I began collecting unsystematically and for the fun of it. Now I have more than 800 copies of (Bram) Stoker's 1897 novel "Dracula." An interesting thing about it is that the original version was sent back to Stoker to be edited and cut down. The original title was "The Undead," but at the last moment, he changed the name. And in the original ending in the manuscript, Dracula's castle gets blown up.

I have some 6,000 or 7,000 other books, around 9,000 comic books, 1,000 non-English books, about 800 movie versions . . . I've found about 2,400 movies that have been made, some of which are very hard to get copies of and very expensive. I have a limit of what I'll pay for one — essentially $10 a copy.

I also have about two dozen cookbooks, some with recipes from Transylvania, and even a diet cookbook from New Orleans. I pretty much stick with the red drinks that use cranberry.

**Q:** What are some of the significant ways vampires have changed over time?

**A:** Up until the 1970s, they're all evil, and the only ending is to kill them. What happens in the '60s and '70s are two new things: We're introduced to the conflicted vampire, who retains enough of his humanity to have a conscience and frets over killing and drinking blood. He either tries to find a substitute for blood, or "takes out the garbage" by selecting people who should die. A variation on that is the "good-guy" vampire who likes the status, the long life, and has found a way to not kill. The other thing is that while there were female vampires before, the first "good-girl" vampire was Vampirella in 1969 in a comic book. She comes from a planet where blood flows like water, but it's drying up. She comes to Earth and gets hold of a scientist who makes artificial blood. Vampirella was modeled after a young Jane Fonda in the movie "Barbarella," and Vampirella grew more and more buxom over time.

In the 1970s, they began to develop vampires for kids, like the character in "Sesame Street." When the "Twilight Saga" came along, you had a vampire book on The New York Times bestseller list for the first time. Vampires even took a humorous twist, like in "Dracula: Dead and Loving It" and "Love at First Bite" . . .

**Q:** One of the things I've always found intriguing and confusing is the various "surefire" ways to kill a vampire for good: beheading, stake through the heart, put them in the sun . . . ?

**A:** In early European folklore, one way was to cut off the head, put it between the legs and stake the body. Originally they were turned over and staked through the back. But in 19th-century literature, you went through the rib cage to aim at the heart. A long time ago, some people believed that vampires should be buried upside down, so that if they started digging, they'd go down into the earth instead of out of it. But in a movie or on TV, what happens when police show up and the corpse has a stake in it? What happens when there's an autopsy and you find fangs? In "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," she dissolves them into dust. With dust, you don't have to deal with the police.

There are other rules about vampires that keep changing on TV and in movies as people come up with ingenious ways of killing the mix of myths. Some vampires are allowed to walk in the sun, have a reflection in the mirror . . . Before, you couldn't take a photo of a vampire

because it didn't have a soul. In "Love at First Bite," Van Helsing comes in with a cross, and the vampire is of Jewish heritage. He says, "You'll have to use a Star of David." In the "Twilight" films, vampires can got out in the sun, but they sparkle. And "Buffy" was just phenomenal in the amount of changes. She brought the most comment from academics.

**Q:** What's going on with "vampires" in the real world?

**A:** In the last 25 years, there is a community of big vampire wannabes. They start adopting a vampire lifestyle — sleeping during the day and working at night, buying a hearse and making it the family car, buying coffins and sleeping in them, going to vampire nightclubs, wearing powder to turn their faces white . . . In the 1990s, there were some people who tried drinking blood, but the body just doesn't accept that as food and regurgitates it. A few would drink small amounts of it in orange juice, but that kind of petered out . . . Now there are what we call "psychic vampires." What they're really after is life energy, the transfer of energy, and they think they're capable of doing that. Then there's the "sapped energy joke" — people who just suck the life out of you.

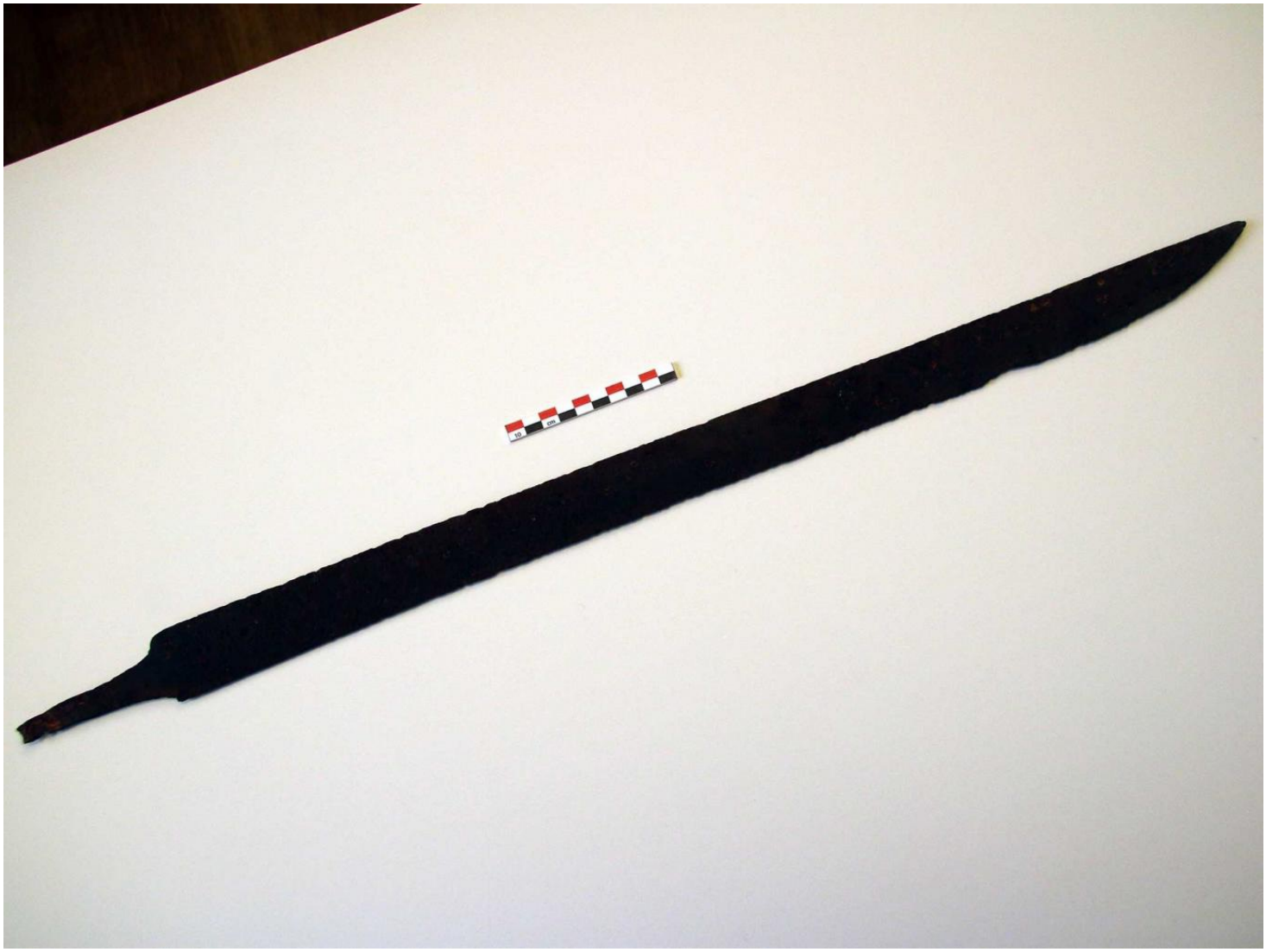
**Q:** How do people react when they find out you research vampires?

**A:** There are a lot of very bad jokes and puns.

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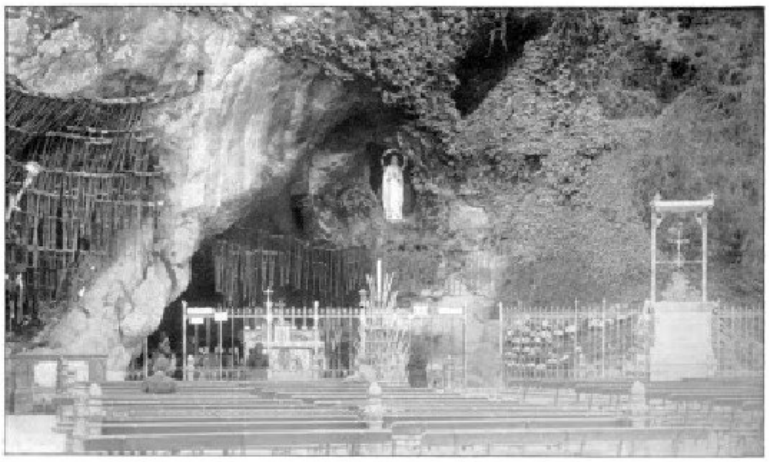

OPVS KAROLI CRIVELLI VENETI



**Monday, February 11, 2013**

## VIRGIN MARY VISITATIONS
### Illinois Manifestations, Miracles or Wishful Thinking?

This seemed like an appropriate posting today as we receive news that Pope Benedict plans to resign his position as leader of the Church, the first pope to do so in over 600 years. As it turns out, today, February 11, is also the anniversary of the first of 18 visions of a lady dressed in white in a grotto at Lourdes, France in 1858. My own interest in such happenings was piqued a number of years ago when I learned just how many strange happening like this had occurred in my home state of Illinois.



**The grotto at Lourdes, France. The sightings of the Virgin Mary began here in February 1858.**

Mysterious visitations from angels, religious visions and the Blessed Mother are nothing new in the history of the world, although most believe that such events ended long ago. This may not be the case, though, especially in Illinois, where the Virgin Mary still makes regular appearances; where paintings, shrines and relics bleed and ooze; and where trees, walls, windows and highway underpasses play host to miraculous forms that entrance the faithful and mystify everyone else.

Visitors from the heavens have reportedly been around since the beginning of recorded time, from the "burning bush" of Moses to Ezekiel's wheel and the numerous stories of angels in earthly form that graced the biblical writings. Perhaps the most famous of the heavenly visitors in modern times is Mary, the mother of Jesus. After the death of her son, she became the core of the early Christian church and since the third century, Mary has made countless visitations, especially to those of the Catholic faith, who hold Mary in higher esteem than other churches.

Several of these visitations have been more famous than others. The first was in December 1531, when Mary was said to have appeared to a Mexican peasant named Juan Diego and left an impression of herself on his cloak. This visitation, and the cloth, can be seen today at the Shrine of Guadalupe in Mexico. I visited this location a number of years ago and saw the image on the cloth. No matter what you believe, there is no doubt that it holds a special meaning for the literally thousands of people who visit the location each day.

Another famous visitation came at Lourdes, France, beginning on February 11, 1858. A young girl named Bernadette Soubrious was gathering firewood near a stream when she heard a terrific noise from a nearby cave. A shimmering cloud appeared and from it, came a beautiful woman who claimed to be the Blessed Mother. She asked Bernadette to have a chapel built on the spot and this grotto has come to be known as one of the most famous religious shrines in the world. Thousands of people have come here for the reportedly healing powers of the water and many have told of further apparitions of Mary.

In May 1917 came the mysterious visitations in Fatima, Portugal, which began as a powerful wind and a blinding light for three children, Lucia dos Santos, Francisco and Jacinto Marto. Mary's appearances at Fatima were witnessed by thousands of people and at one point, a massive crowd claimed to witness impossible movements of the sun in the sky. Divine Intervention or mass hallucination? No one knows for sure, but the faithful will tell you that the Blessed Mother did appear at Fatima and that she passed along cryptic messages to the children. Her final message was said to be so earth-shattering that it was kept secret by the Vatican for many years. When revealed, the Church stated that the prediction had accurately foretold the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II.



**Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois**

In Illinois, the Lady of the Snows Shrine in Belleville has been the setting for visits from the Virgin Mary for many years. She was first encountered by Ray Doiron here in 1993 and appeared for a number of years afterward. Doiron had been through three near-death experiences and was deaf in his right ear before being visited by Mary. He was sleeping one afternoon and he heard a soft voice that instructed him to go to the nearby Lady of Snows Shrine, which is a duplicate of the shrine at Lourdes. He was told to first go on February 11 (the anniversary of the first sightings at Lourdes) and then on the 13th day of each

successive month.

At first, Doiron kept the visitations a secret, but the events were always the same. There would be a strong wind, followed by an eerie calm, and then a statue at the shrine would turn start to glow with a bluish tint. The light around the statue would pulse for a few moments and then turn white and very bright. The Blessed Mother would then emerge from the light, speaking and imparting life lessons on Doiron, which he wrote down to prevent any mistakes. He was soon allowed to bring a small number of friends with him to the shrine so that they could experience the visitations too and later on, Mary allowed him to make them public. Since that time, thousands have visited the site and it remains a popular and blessed spot today.

Several years ago, although the visitations continue to this day, Mary also reportedly appeared to six young people in the war-torn county of Bosnia. The events here have attracted more than 11 million people from over the world. One of the pilgrims who came to Bosnia was Joseph Reinholtz, a retired railroad worker from Hillside. Before journeying to Bosnia, he had been suffering from blurred vision and bouts with blindness. He traveled to the site of the apparitions to meet with one of the young people who had reported experiencing the Blessed Mother. She prayed over Reinholtz in 1987 and after his return to Illinois, his vision slowly returned to normal.

Reinholtz returned to Bosnia in 1989 and met with the young woman again. She instructed him that when he returned home, he was to look for a large crucifix that was near a three-branched tree. She told him that this was a place where he was to go and pray. Reinholtz later discovered the location that she described at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Hillside and he began making frequent visits to the site to pray. His determination was rewarded on August 15, 1990, when he experienced his first visitation from Mary. She returned to him again on November 1 and this time, he claimed, she was accompanied by St. Michael and three angels. Reinholtz spoke widely of what he was experiencing and soon thousands of people began flocking to the large cemetery cross. It wasn't long before complaints about the number of spectators caused the cemetery officials to move the crucifix to another location in 1992. Today, it is quite accessible and the cemetery has placed a paved parking lot next to it.



**The faithful still flock to the cross at Queen of Heaven Cemetery**

The visitations, apparitions and bizarre events reportedly continue today and occur every day but Tuesday, which is coincidentally the day of the week that the Archdiocese of Chicago placed a "restriction of obedience" on Reinholtz and asked that he not visit the cemetery. Sadly, Joseph Reinholtz suffered a stroke in February 1995 and was hospitalized, where the Blessed Mother continued to visit him. He passed away in December 1996 but his legacy continues in Queen of Heaven Cemetery, where the

crucifix still stands.

Reinholtz has not been the only person to report miraculous visitations at the Queen of Heaven cross. There have been dozens of photographs here that purport to show angels and various types of light phenomena. Others claim that they have seen blood dripping from the cross and others have reported the scent of invisible roses in the air.

I have visited this site several times and it is almost always surrounded by the faithful, who are praying and passing out religious literature. I have been shown many “miraculous” photographs by pilgrims here, all taken around the cross, but confess that they look a lot like bad photography and sun glare to me. Regardless, though, I cannot argue about the importance of these photos in the lives of the believers. No matter what the reader might believe in personally, a visit to Queen of Heaven will convince him that something wonderful is taking place here ---- whether it be of this world or another.

Along with sightings of the Blessed Mother, Illinois has also played host to other religious apparitions and few “miraculously” weeping statues and relics. Over the last three decades, there have been more than a dozen religious apparitions and unexplained happenings in the Chicago area and other parts of the state. Each of them has attracted dozens, or even hundreds, of believers, skeptics and news reporters, always on the look-out for an unusual story. The strange items and events have included statues, paintings and icons that appears to weep and bleed, as well as images, shapes and shadows that appear on windows, walls and even tree trunks.

One of the mysterious relics was a painting of the Blessed Mother that was hanging in the St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church in 1986. One day, the painting suddenly began to weep, a phenomenon that continued over the next seven months. During this time, some sort of clear liquid that looked like water dripped from the eyes, and the fingers, of the painting. Hundreds of people came to witness the event but the icon abruptly stopped crying in July 1987. A year later, it began again but the weeping was short-lived this time. During this second incident, the tears produced by the painting were used to anoint 19 other icons in Pennsylvania and all of them began to weep too.

Another painting, this one an inexpensive rendition of Mary and Jesus, reportedly began to weep in April 1987. This one was not located in a church however, but in the apartment of a retired tailor on West Devon Avenue in Chicago. The event made minor news in the city but still managed to attract crowds to the man’s home.

Another barely remembered event took place at St. Adrian’s Church on Chicago’s south side in May 1970. According to witnesses, a collection of remains of St. Maximina, which was a 1,700 year old first-class relic, began to ooze watery blood. The bleeding lasted for a few months and then came to an end without warning.

In June 1984, a wooden statue of the Virgin Mary appeared to shed tears at the St. John of God Catholic Church on the southwest side. The Archdiocese of Chicago investigated the

phenomenon for more than a year before announcing that it could not positively rule out natural causes for liquid oozing from the wood, despite the wood's age and composition. The faithful were not concerned and continued to gather at the church until the tears eventually came to an end.

Several icons at Apanacio and St. John on the north side of the city reportedly began weeping in the early 1990s. The icons were stolen by an unknown thief, but were later returned. Once they came back, the tears no longer appeared on them. The church has since been disbanded.

An icon panel of the Blessed Mother at St. George's Antiochan Orthodox Church in Cicero began weeping oil at the beginning of Holy Week in April 1994. Eight orthodox bishops examined the tears and declared them to be genuine. Mary has continued to cry and the relic has since been renamed Our Lady of Cicero. An Orthodox bishop declared that an event was "an extension of the miracle of Our Lady of Cicero" in Schiller Park in May 1997. The event he referred to was when a tiny paper copy of the St. George Antiochian icon began to ooze oily tears. Moments later, the faithful who had gathered to see it claimed to see a life-sized image of the icon appear on a picture window behind the makeshift shrine that housed it. It was a one-time event but a breath-taking one to those who were present.

In November 1994, the owner of a religious gift store in St. Charles claimed that six plastic statues of Mary bowed their heads after being unpacked from a shipping box and having rosaries placed around their necks.

The Virgin of Guadalupe was said to have visited Hanover Park in July 1997, appearing on the wall of an apartment complex located at 2420 Glendale Terrace. The image appeared from shadows created by a security light that was angled at the building. When the light was turned off, the image vanished, but the faithful remained, convinced that a holy miracle had taken place. Today, at the southwest end of the parking lot, a tent has been erected next to the building where the apparition appeared. The tent contains hundreds of votive candles, offerings, rosaries and a statue of the Blessed Mother.

In July 1999, another shadowy image of Mary appeared in Joliet. A young boy was playing in the street on the east side of the city and looked up to the second story of a vacant house and saw the image in the window. News quickly spread and over the course of the next several weeks, thousands of people jammed tiny Abe Street, blocking traffic and trampling the lawns of those who lived nearby. They came to pray, stare, leave messages and to "soak up the sign from God". The police were forced to set up barricades to keep people on the sidewalks but it did no good and the crowds poured into the streets. The faithful remained here for most of the summer, leaving roses and candles, but not everyone who came was convinced. Most of the skeptical thought that the image looked "more like an owl."

In July 2001, the Blessed Mother dropped in again, this time in Rogers Park. This sighting was unique for Chicago as the Virgin reportedly appeared in an oval-shaped scar in the trunk of a tree. Despite the fact that skeptics insisted that the faithful were merely seeing "whatever

they wanted to see", scores of people flocked to an area in the park near the corner of Honore and Rogers Avenues and surrounded the tree with candles, rosaries and prayer offerings. The alleged apparition appeared about 10 feet from the ground, inside of the scar on the trunk. The scar looked like a medallion on a chain and the folds in the scar tissue created the image of cloaked person. As the story spread of the sighting, so many onlookers came to the park that Chicago police had to close the street to be able to handle the crowd.

And this would not turn out to be the only "miracle tree" in Illinois. An old tree in a Catholic Cemetery in Quincy, located in west central Illinois, was noticed to hold the life-sized figure of Jesus Christ a few years ago. A cemetery worker was the first to discover the phenomenon but kept it a secret for several days before deciding to share it with others. It should be noted that the image can only be seen from a certain distance, and certain angle, which is why the faithful say that it had not been discovered earlier. After the Quincy newspaper and television station ran stories on the tree, people began flocking to the cemetery to see the tree. According to a spokesperson for the Roman Catholic Cemetery Association, nearly 2,000 people were visiting the site each day and a guest book that had been placed next to the tree acquired 30,000 signatures during the summer of 1998.

The tree, which had been given the names of "The Jesus Tree" and the "Good Shepherd Tree", had to have fence placed around it because many of the visitors were peeling pieces of bark from the tree to take home as souvenirs. The grounds around the tree had been worn bare by the thousands of visitors who came. They hung crosses on the tree and fence, left rosaries, flowers, stuff animals, photographs of loved ones and more. The tree continues to attract visitors today.

One of the most recent alleged visitations by the Blessed Mother occurred in April 2005 when hundreds of people began gathering at a Fullerton Avenue underpass on the Kennedy Expressway to witness an image believed to be the Virgin Mary. Thousands who came to see the image quickly turned the spot into a shrine and dubbed the huge water and salt stain, which they believed formed into the shape of the Blessed Mother, "Our Lady of the Underpass". The faithful were convinced that it marked the recent passing of Pope John Paul II.



**The "Our Lady of the Underpass" image was discovered in April 2005 under Chicago's Kennedy Expressway. Thousands flocked to the site, which was a salt stain they believed was in the image of the Virgin Mary. It remained a shrine until just recently.** Word quickly spread and the image was widely reported on local, then national, news shows and in newspapers all over the country. Believers flocked to the underpass, tying up traffic and creating headaches for state troopers and city police officers. Those who gathered left behind candles, flowers, pictures and tokens, all offered with prayers and tears. Many of the people that I saw at the underpass myself were anxious to touch the image, presumably in the belief that it would bless or cure them, and some held their children out of over the police barricades that were erected around the image to touch or kiss the stain.

The Chicago archdioceses had no immediate reaction to the image, due to more pressing issues such as the conclave in the Vatican City at the time to elect a new pope. When he returned from Rome after the funeral of Pope John Paul II and the selection of Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Francis George side-stepped the issue of whether the church believed the stain was legitimate. "If it's helpful in reminding people of the Virgin Mary's care and love for us," he said, "that's wonderful."

Within days, there was discussion about the city coming in and either painting over the image or power washing it off the underpass due to the traffic congestion that it was causing. However, the area was actually under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation and officials there said that there were no plans to remove the image. As it turned out, though, someone took matters into his own hands.

On the night of May 5, 2005, a man used black shoe polish to scrawl the words "Big Lie" over the stain. Victor Gonzalez of Chicago was quickly arrested and charged with criminal damage to state-supported property. He told relatives that he believed visitors to the site were worshipping a graven image in violation of the Second Commandment. The graffiti did little to discourage the visitors and managed to make them angry instead. The following day, the Chicago police department directed transportation workers to paint over the image with brown paint for "safety reasons". Many of those who were gathered at the site wept as a coat of brown paint was rolled over the stain.

Many of the candles, flowers, pictures and other mementoes were left behind on the spot and as it turned out, this was for the best. Less than a week later, two car wash employees, Rosa Diaz and Anne Reczek, used a degreaser to clean off the wall on their lunch break, removing both the brown paint and the shoe polish that had been used to vandalize the stain. Onlookers were again "blessed" with the image of the Virgin Mary and the site remained intact for many years. Even after the salt stain faded, the shrine remained with photographs posted of the original design. The number of faithful faded over time and by the end of 2012, the shrine was no more.

The miraculous visions and visitations of Illinois are among the greatest oddities of the state and many are torn between belief and disbelief. What do you, the reader, make of these strange, and perhaps wonderful, sightings and experiences? If you are not a believer, you are

apt to dismiss them as the fevered imaginings of a religious mind. Perhaps -- or perhaps not -- regardless, I'd prefer to leave that up to you to decide.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:01 AM

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# Vodou is elusive and endangered, but it remains the soul of Haitian people

*Kim Wall and Caterina Clerici in Île-à-Vache, Haiti*
*Saturday 7 November 2015 Last modified on Saturday 7 November 2015*

theguardian.com

Far from B-movie cliches, vodou is spiritual system and a way of life but even in Haiti, where it became an official religion, it faces prejudice and hostility

- **Haitian vodou practitioners discuss what their faith means to them**

Haiti, the saying goes, is "70% Catholic, 30% Protestant, and 100% Vodou". Vodou is everywhere in the Caribbean nation, a spiritual system infusing everything from medicine and agriculture to cosmology and arts. Yet it is almost nowhere to be seen: ceremonies are not just expensive, but targets of hate crime. Nowadays, some say, Vodou is in danger.

In the heart of remote Île-à-Vache of Haiti's southern coast, however, the religion is alive and well. Completely off the grid, the island has only two medical clinics for 14,000 residents and so Jeom Frichenel Sisius, the island's principal Vodou priest, is a spiritual leader, doctor and midwife all at once.

His remedies, which he claims can fix everything from diseases and haunted houses to career and love problems, are kept in a carefully locked shed in a room adorned with skulls and an *nzambi* (zombie) painted on the walls.

"If someone has a headache and the doctors cannot heal it, I can," he explains, taking swigs of herbal rum from a gigantic bottle as he speaks. "The only things Vodou can't do are radiography and mammography." Vodou is necessary, he stresses, and the only people who fail to understand that are the Christians.

On top of this knowledge and divine healing powers, Sisius also happens to throw the best parties.

Here, Vodou defies cliches of zombies, pins in dolls and black magic. There are none of the cornflour drawings, animal sacrifices or rattles that characterize orthodox Haitian Vodou ceremonies: just a lot of dancing and ecstasy fuelled by rum, drums and divine presence. It's almost full moon, and lured by the music and beauty of it all, the spirits – *lwas* – begin to arrive.



Only weeks after Sisius's ceremony, a great *mapou* tree fell. Not literally, of course. In local folklore, the sacred species (silk-cotton tree in English) is the embodiment of someone heroic and Haiti was mourning the death of Max Gesner Beauvoir, the supreme chief of Vodou.

Beauvoir, who stumbled into spiritualism after 15 years as a biochemist in the US, worked tirelessly

Saturday, innit?

- Celtiberico
9h ago

While it's true that a cow can't become God, a human being can't do so either...

    - Pazuzu Celtiberico
    4h ago

    We've chatted before, I think you'll like this one, if you don't already know it: Nero is reported to have quipped, upon being served mushrooms, that they are indeed the food of the gods: "Why, my own father became a God by eating some!"

    He was referring to his predecessor, Claudius, having been poisoned to death with mushrooms. Emperors by tradition adopted their successors as their sons, and were believed to attain godhood upon their deaths. Say what you will about old Nero, he was good for a bon mot or two!

- Cs gettynow
10h ago

The difference between others religion and Vodoo is: others religion kill human to save their god whereas Vodoo kill animal to save peoples

    - blodeuwedd7 Cs gettynow
    9h ago

    No, voudons have also killed people, not just animals. Do your research.

    - Cs gettynow blodeuwedd7
    9h ago

    Self-defence is a countermeasure that involves defending the well-being of oneself or of another from harm, self-defence is the first right for any human, when Haitian have to defend themselves again slavery and imperialism, it is normal they kill French criminals.

    - Pazuzu Cs gettynow
    4h ago

    That's why crime is so low in Haiti.

- camcitizen
10h ago

Anthropologists must make a living and what better than delving into mumbo - jumbo land. A rogue's science for the none too bright or discerning. Why not simply visit Mystic

Meg and her weggie board or watch Superman play god?

- vonZeppelin
10h ago

Anyone bothered to consult a chicken spokesthing about any of this...?

- healinginjustuce
11h ago

This lovely article describes amongst many things, how "le blanc" have lost their spirits. Many of the comments are a testimony to that statement.

There is a beautiful remedy to "soul loss", and that is suffering. So next time, life gives you hell dear know it alls, remember to thank the spirits for your suffering as through suffering you may find your lost spirit, you mojo, your drive, your luck and good fortune and your shared humanity again.

    - HomoSapienSapiens healinginjustuce
    10h ago

    Fine words. Thank you.

- EightEyedSpy
12h ago

Vodouisants in the arts and music have been vocal activists against government oppression and proponents of reform in Haiti.

For example, Boukman Eksperyans and their song Jou Nou Revolte.

- stippidoo
12h ago

Mental. Like everything 'spiritual'.

    - Vendangestippidoo
    12h ago

    If you are implying that spirituality is related to a dysfunctional mind, you are very wrong. Just because rational science cannot quantify it, does not mean it does not exist. Human Beings and life in general are NOT rational.

    - stippidoo Vendange
    8h ago
    - Pazuzu Vendange
    4h ago

    No, they're a mix of both rational and irrational elements. Both are important, but

that shouldn't lead one to conclude that sacrificing a chicken will cure one of a disease, or that doing a rosary will prevent an earthquake.

- ID7586903
12h ago

What is the UN saying about it?!?

- tollef
13h ago

How typical isn't it that when a certain kind of religion, however primitive and backwards, is identified as minority, underclass, endangered etc, it no longer gets the same treatment as religious belief anywhere else. Then it's no longer stupid, corrupt, immoral or socially dangerous. It's beneficial, all of a sudden. Never mind all the progress we seem to have made on such issues otherwise.

- Ginen
13h ago

The Vodoun religion and culture are widely misperceived. They are about goodness and happiness. Ayibobo!

- jays37
13h ago

It is also the official religion of Benin, where wholesale animal sacrifice is practised with competitive ferocity right up to presidential level. Anything and everything from litters of kittens to herds of cattle are crudely butchered to get a leg up from the spirits. It is not something to be appreciated with anthropological benignity.

    - OldEnglandisdying jays37
    13h ago

    Not that dissimilar to Islam and Judaism then, they both practice "crudely butchering" animals to appease their imaginary beings.

    - jays37 OldEnglandisdying
    12h ago

    True, before they eat them. They also butcher each other.

    - ataylorusa jays37
    5h ago

    Ah, like christee's and all other fuckwits?

- Jheison Romain

13h ago

Many still won't get it.... In the words of Frantz Fanon: “Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief.”

- Mink Stoli Jheison Romain
  6h ago

  You e just explained racism

- ataylorusa Mink Stoli
  5h ago

  Bias in general, not just racism.

- FreddySteadyGO
  14h ago

There was a voodoo prophet or whatever they call themselves on the interwebs from S.Louisiana years ago and she used to do a new year forecast until the year she forecast the destruction of New Orleans 6 months before it happened and after Katrina she went quiet.

You'd think she'd have more faith in herself and get out of the way or something. A pity because the forecasts were pleasantly amusing except for the final one.

Jou...jou shoulda got outatheway!

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*Voudou dancing on Île-à-vache. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Lunise Morse, lead female singer, and Richard Morse, founder, songwriter and lead male singer of the mizik-rasin (roots band) RAM. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Animal sacrifices are still common during Vodou ceremonies. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian*

to protect vodouisants from defamation and persecution. At his home in Mariani, he drank coffee with scholars, seekers, journalists and even Christians, patiently explaining what Vodou was ("the soul of Haitian people and a way of life") – and what it was not.

At a time when Haiti still had tourism, he held spectacles of entranced women, legs akimbo and biting heads of chickens, even staging a honeymoon ceremony for the Clintons.

While perhaps creating some stereotypes of his own, few did more than Beauvoir in battling distorted horror-flick cliches still associated with Haitian Vodou.

"The most popular Haitian word in the world is *zombie*," explains Richard Morse, a musician and owner of Port-au-Prince's Hotel Oloffson (who insists he never met an undead creature). "And that's a reflection of the world more than it is of Haiti."

At a time when "world music" was all the rage, Morse came to Haiti in 1987 for musical inspiration. Growing up in suburban Connecticut to a Haitian mother and American father, Morse never expected to get into Vodou beyond the glimpses of folklore he'd seen at home. In 2001, he was officially initiated.

"I only came for the rhythms initially," he recalls, seated on the veranda of the hotel that became his livelihood and permanent home. "Then I found out that the rhythms don't walk alone. The rhythms walk with dance steps, with colors, with spirits, with prayer. The rhythms walk with God."



*Voudou dancing on Île-à-vache. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Lunise Morse, lead female singer, and Richard Morse, founder, songwriter and lead male singer of the mizik-rasin (roots band) RAM. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Animal sacrifices are still common during Vodou ceremonies. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he*

Every Thursday for the past 23 years, Morse's 13-member roots band – which includes his wife and son – plays fiery, upbeat interpretations of traditional Vodou prayers. Aid workers dance next to local hipsters, elderly couples next to a local LGBT chapter. This is his part in dispelling myths about the practice.

"Most Americans don't know that they don't know what Vodou really is," explains Elizabeth McAlister, scholar of religion at Wesleyan University, specializing in Haitian Vodou. They think Vodou is about sorcery, maybe love magic, usually some sort of sinister practice."

The 1920s and 1930s cinema – the heyday of B-

*worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian*

films like White Zombie and pulp fiction – helped reinforce caricatures of Africans as hypersexualized, superstitious and demonic.

"The best thing that ever happened to racism is Vodou," explains Ira Lowenthal, an anthropologist, Vodou arts collector and former aid worker originally from New Jersey, who has lived in Haiti for over 40 years. "They made up their stories about it and their stories confirmed every prejudice of every white person in the world. It tells that person from Ohio that they're right about black people as scary and dangerous … you can actually see on a screen your own racist beliefs justified."




*Voudou dancing on Île-à-vache. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Lunise Morse, lead female singer, and Richard Morse, founder, songwriter and lead male singer of the mizik-rasin (roots band) RAM. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Animal sacrifices are still common during Vodou ceremonies. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in*

The west's romance with a misguided understanding of Haitian folklore just happened to coincide with the US occupation of the country – which set out to modernize Haiti, while attempting to systematically erase Vodou.

The religion was born with institutional slavery. Ripped from homelands and heritage, thousands of those who would become Haitians were shipped across the Atlantic to an island, where the indigenous population had already been wiped out, for backbreaking labor in cane plantations.

"They were treated as cattle. As animals to be bought and sold; worth nothing more than a cow. Often less," says Lowenthal.

"Vodou is the response to that. Vodou says 'no, I'm not a cow. Cows cannot dance, cows do not sing. Cows cannot become God. Not only am I a human being – I'm considerably more human than you. Watch me create divinity in this world you have given me that is so ugly and so hard. Watch me become God in front of your eyes.'"

And so Vodou, unlike eastern spirituality which is often focused on the mind, begins in the human flesh: Haitians dance, rather than think, their way to ecstasy; a transcendence into a more beautiful reality.

Divine possessions are reserved for Haitians, who inherit their spirits through bloodlines, explains Lowenthal, who attended countless rituals in mountain villages during his research. Foreigners can never be vehicles – *chwals* ("horses") – to be ridden by the divine.

"That power is stunning. It's not scary. It's stunning. It shows you what a human being can do. And what we can't do. White people lost their spirits centuries ago. We lost it all. The Haitians believe we used to have spirits, but we were too stupid to keep them."

front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian



Voudou dancing on Île-à-vache. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Lunise Morse, lead female singer, and Richard Morse, founder, songwriter and lead male singer of the mizik-rasin (roots band) RAM. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Animal sacrifices are still common during Vodou ceremonies. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian

Without the *lwas*, Haiti might never have become a nation at all.

On the night of 14 August 1791, slaves from nearby plantations gathered deep in the woods of Bois Caïman, of what was then the French colony of Saint-Domingue. By the fire, a young woman possessed by Ezili Dantor, the warrior-mother *lwah* often iconized as Black Madonna, slit the throat of a large black creole pig and distributed its blood to the revolutionaries, who swore to kill the *blancs* – white settlers – as they drank it.

With otherworldly strength, the legend goes, the world's richest colony was overthrown and the first black republic proclaimed. Haitian Vodou became a religion with rebellion and freedom at its heart.

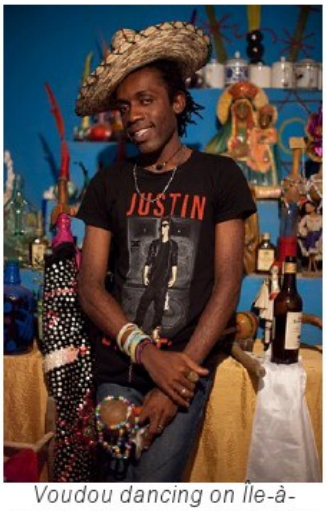
Perhaps these are the roots of the west's fear of Vodou, Lowenthal speculates: it is an unbreakable revolutionary spirit threatening to inspire other black Caribbean republics – or, God forbid, the United States itself.

"These people will never be conquered again," Lowenthal emphasizes. "They will be exploited, they will be downtrodden, they will be impoverished – but you can tell not a single Haitian walks around with his head down … They're more human than the people who enslaved them. They were better than their masters, able to live in another realm. There's no other more articulate response to oppression than that. And that's why Vodou is here – because Vodou is the soul of Haitian people."

***

Ricardo Marie Dadoune (known to friends and worshippers as "Bébé") has known he was homosexual since he was eight years old. He's now 26 and has a boyfriend, though he doesn't broadcast it: several gay men he knows have already been killed.

In a bustling neighborhood in Port-au-Price, his peristyle (vodou temple) is tucked away between colorful barbershops and vendors hawking barbecued chicken. On a table in a




*Voudou dancing on Île-à-vache. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Lunise Morse, lead female singer, and Richard Morse, founder, songwriter and lead male singer of the mizik-rasin (roots band) RAM. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Animal sacrifices are still common during Vodou ceremonies. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian*

windowless room, plaster saint statuettes are lined up next to African dolls, perfume bottles, candles and a ram's skull, horns still attached. Ricardo shakes a beaded rattle in all four directions and then pours rum on the cement floor three times: first to his left, then to his right and finally right in front of his orange flip-flops.

"This is a safe place," he explains. "When we have a ceremony here, nothing happens. People like us here, so we're not afraid to come and enjoy."

He may be in a Justin Bieber T-shirt and jeans now, but the peristyle is the only place Ricardo can dress the way he really prefers: with lipstick, earrings, a cloth on his head the way women do in the countryside, and a dress.

While homosexuality in Haiti is not illegal, it is not socially acceptable. To avoid discrimination, violence and even murder, many gays and lesbians lead double lives.

"In other countries the gays are free," he says. "They can wear what they want to wear, but not here in Haiti. After the ceremony I have to take off the clothes because I can't walk the street dressed like a woman here."

Today, peristyles across Haiti have become makeshift religious gay clubs, safe havens where the LGBT community isn't just tolerated but actively welcomed.

The *lwas*, much like the Haitian ancestors themselves, travel far: underwater, from the heart of Africa all the way to Hispaniola.

While Haitians too worship an almighty God – *Bondye* in Creole – he is believed to stand above petty human matters. The *lwas*, not so much. Each with its own area of expertise, *lwas* have individual tastes: some like champagne and perfume, others five-star Barbancourt rum and animal sacrifices. Spirits only choose those they love, and some prefer to occupy non-straight *chwals*.

"Many, many gays and lesbians are valued members of Vodou societies," explains McAlister, who has devoted years to researching LGBT in Haitian religion. "There is an idea that Vodou spirits that are thought to be gay 'adopt' and protect young adults who then become gay."

"Vodou 'does gender' totally differently than the Christian tradition," McAlister explains. After all, Vodou has gender fluidity at the core: men might become mediums for female spirits, women for male spirits. "But Christians, especially evangelicals, have zero flexibility for this;

they see homosexuality as a sin, period."

Stigmatized as a primitive, or even wicked religion, Vodou is inherently progressive and inclusive, McAlister continues.

"Vodou tends to be radically unjudgmental," she explains. "The alcoholic, the thief, the homeless, the mentally ill, all of these people are welcomed into a Vodou temple and given respect."

In reality, McAlister emphasizes, Vodou is far more similar to a close-knit church community than most Americans could ever imagine. Or as Morse puts it: with food-centered rituals to please spirits, it's sort of like Thanksgiving – just several times a year. And it's feminist too, advocating equal status for male and female priests.



*Voudou dancing on Île-à-vache. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Lunise Morse, lead female singer, and Richard Morse, founder, songwriter and lead male singer of the mizik-rasin (roots band) RAM. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Animal sacrifices are still common during Vodou ceremonies. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Ricardo Marie Dadoune, a 26-year-old gay hougan (Vodou priest) in the Port-au-Prince peristyle where he worships. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian Mireille Ain, a French manbo (Vodou priestess), in front of her peristyle in Jacmel, on the southern coast of Haiti. Photograph: Caterina Clerici for the Guardian*

For missionaries and churches already hell-bent on demonizing Vodou, the religion's progressive outlook may be just another nail in the coffin. Throughout history, Christians have often identified Vodou as the root of all Haiti's problems.

As 2010's earthquake killed perhaps 230,000 and displaced 1.5 million people, US reverend Pat Robertson asserted that Haiti had brought it upon itself through a "pact with the devil", referring to Bois Caïman's uprising. The subsequent cholera epidemic, most likely caused by leaked sewage from a UN camp, was also blamed by some on vodouisants, triggering mobs to murder dozens across the country.

It is perhaps not surprising that a religion born out of colonial subjugation and the trauma of slavery would irk Christians – who also happened to be the slave-masters. On arrival, slaves had eight days to convert – though their native faith was often later on blended with Catholic practices, resulting in today's wildly eclectic pantheon of African spirits alongside Catholic saints "creolized" to walk among them.

In fear of a rival power base, the church repressing Vodou became a recurring theme in Haitian history, McAlister explains.

"The Christians humiliate us by saying that Vodou is evil," Ricardo says. "It's not true. Vodou is not a bad thing. They have their faith, we have ours."

Two days earlier, evangelicals came to his temple and interrupted his ceremony to preach the

gospel. They told him he must embrace Jesus as his personal savior, as he continued to perform his rituals, unfazed. This time, it didn't turn violent.

For a long time, even Haiti itself shied away from a religion so quintessential to its national identity. While President Michel Martelly described Beauvoir's passing as a "great loss for the country", the government itself wasn't always so sympathetic, with Vodou officially outlawed until 1934. Even though it became an official religion in 2003, no one knows how many vodouisants Haiti has today.

Vodou is still something many Haitians, including the diaspora, keep underground. Peristyles, even sacred *mapou* trees, are regularly targets for vandalism and arson. Worshippers risk harassment and violence, with lynchings not unheard of.

Countless attacks against it have forged a newfound solidarity among priests and worshippers as they carve out a political voice. And slowly, things are changing: a new statute is allowing Vodou leaders to perform funerals and weddings, and university courses are now researching the religion. While Beauvoir's successor is yet to be announced, his legacy may be only the beginning.

Ricardo is cautiously optimistic: one day, Vodou may be a catalyst for a more inclusive Haiti. He's waiting to go abroad – anywhere – where he can open about who he is ("This is my life, this is who I am and I will be gay forever").

But until then, he'll be in the peristyle. "There is a lot of love inside the Vodou: it is our heart and blood. So we will not back down. We have an important and strong force with us. Without it, we could not exist today."

Loading comments… Trouble loading?

- greensox
3h ago

Slightly exotic religious bollocks is still religious bollocks shocker.

- Pazuzu
4h ago

So, superstition, quack medicine, pseudoscience, priests controlling people through fear of curses and spirits: that's all ok, because some people from rich countries find it exotic? And the reason it's all ok, what makes it different from the major religions, from what I'm reading here btl, is because the big-league religions have killed far more people? Sounds an awful lot to me like the people trying to defend Ben Carson by saying that it's ok if he lied in his biography, because other people have told bigger lies. One can only imagine the comments here if the article had been on tent revivals in Appalachia promoting faith-healing and speaking in tongues, which is pretty much the same thing the vodou practitioners do. Probably something along the lines of "Can you believe those ignorant rednecks, praying to their invisible friend in the sky?!?"

- LePouple

5h ago

Voodoo, as I understand it, is whatever is beneficial for a person to say it is. That's not a sneer.
Speaking to relativists, Voodoo is relative; to the politically correct, Voodoo is progressive; and to the powerful.. etc

- mandrake

6h ago

Voodoo has shown to be effective in pain reduction. Patients that are induced into a zombie-like state are totally and permanently insensitive to life-threatening injury and outside stimulation.

- NewLabourWeary

7h ago

The spelling is: voodoo.

  - Jonathan Carfax NewLabourWeary

  6h ago

  For ignorant Westerners....sure.

  - TimWilliams Jonathan Carfax

  3h ago
  Contributor

  Those ignorant alphabet inventing Romans..... ? Since every spelling I've ever seen has been with the double oo, there has to be another agenda, certainly the fault cannot be with ignorant westerners. If you know of a haitian alphabet then by all means elaborate.

- Catherine098

7h ago

It seems that nearly every journalist who visits Haiti speaks to Richard Morse.

- Max7059

7h ago

Ridiculous, fear based rubbish.

- Seani Elvis Love

7h ago

I feel sad for Lowenthal if he visited countless peristyles on his time in Haiti and he

never had a possession experience. Being possessed by loa was of the most beautiful and powerful experiences of my life when I was there shortly after the earthquake. It isn't accurate than foreigners can't be ridden.

Besides that, a great article and it's wonderful to see some of the uglier (mostly racist) fabrications about Vodou get deconstructed.

- Jonathan Carfax Seani Elvis Love
  7h ago

  To add to Seani's point - there are many non-Haitians in US, UK, Canada & Australia who are properly initiated as Manbo or Houngan in Haiti and function with that authority.

  Also - such possession by the Lwa is not the sole remit of Vodou in Haiti, but also sister tradition in the Dominican Republic (21 Divisions) and Puerto Rico (Sanse).

  Lowenthal needs to get around more.

- lastmanstanding2015
  8h ago

Coming to a town near you

- BoycottWales
  8h ago

The Haitians I've met had the opinion it was a load of nonsense practice by old women, my girlfriends grandmas curses were a source of bemusement and anger amongst the family.

- M1042StA
  8h ago
  0 1

Perhaps the writer should try living full-time in a voodoo-dominated society with no western, or Christian presence. All animist religions rely on appeasing and appropriating spiritual powers, and these are real. But the question is- where do they come from? A Western secular, approach doesn't answer this question. Neither have I ever met an atheist, raging against Jesus, who couldn't see the lunacy of believing in, and even respecting, the gods of the poor folk who have never heard Him

Reply |
Report

- garetko
  9h ago

I loved Geoffery Holder's character in *Live and Let Die*. Anyway I'm off down the pub.

By David Van Biema / New York and Tim McGirk / JerusalemMonday, July 07, 2008


*AFP / Getty Images*

A first-century BC tablet, thought to originate from the Jordanian bank of the Dead Sea, that tells the story of a Messiah who rose again after three days from the grave

A 3-ft.-high tablet romantically dubbed "Gabriel's Revelation" could challenge the uniqueness of the idea of the Christian Resurrection. The tablet appears to date authentically to the years just before the birth of Jesus and yet — at least according to one Israeli scholar — it announces the raising of a messiah after three days in the grave. If true, this could mean that Jesus' followers had access to a well-established paradigm when they decreed that Christ himself rose on the third day — and it might even hint that they they could have applied it in their grief after their master was crucified. However, such a contentious reading of the 87-line tablet depends on creative interpretation of a smudged passage, making it the latest entry in the woulda/coulda/shoulda category of possible New Testament artifacts; they are useful to prove less-spectacular points and to stir discussion on the big ones, but probably not to settle them nor shake anyone's faith.

The ink-on-stone document, which is owned by a Swiss-Israeli antiques collector and reportedly came to light about a decade ago, has been dated by manuscript and chemical experts to a period just before Jesus' birth. Some scholars think it may originally have been part of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a trove of religious texts found in caves on the West Bank that were possibly associated with John the Baptist. The tablet is written in the form of an end-of-the-world prediction in the voice of the angel Gabriel; one line, for instance, predicts that "in three days you will know evil will be defeated by justice."

Such "apocalypses," often featuring a triumphant military figure called a messiah (literally, anointed one), were not uncommon in the religious and politically tumultuous Jewish world of 1st century B.C. Palestine. But what may make the Gabriel tablet unique is its 80th line, which begins with the words "In three days" and includes some form of the verb "to live." Israel Knohl, an expert in Talmudic and biblical language at Jerusalem's Hebrew University who was not involved in the first research on the artifact, claims that it refers to a historic 1st-century Jewish rebel named Simon who was killed by the Romans in 4 B.C., and should read "In three days, you shall live. I Gabriel command you." If so, Jesus-era Judaism had begun to explore the idea of a three-day resurrection before Jesus was born.

This, in turn, undermines one of the strongest literary arguments employed by Christians over

centuries to support the historicity of the Resurrection (in which they believe on faith): the specificity and novelty of the idea that the Messiah would die on a Friday and rise on a Sunday. Who could make such stuff up? But, as Knohl told TIME, maybe the Christians had a model to work from. The idea of a "dying and rising messiah appears in some Jewish texts, but until now, everyone thought that was the impact of Christianity on Judaism," he says. "But for the first time, we have proof that it was the other way around. The concept was there before Jesus." If so, he goes on, "this should shake our basic view of Christianity. ... What happens in the New Testament [could have been] adopted by Jesus and his followers based on an earlier messiah story."

Not so fast, say some Christian academics. "It is certainly not perfectly clear that the tablet is talking about a crucified and risen savior figure called Simon," says Ben Witherington, an early-Christianity expert at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky. The verb that Knohl translates as "rise!," Witherington says, could also mean "there arose," and so one can ask "does it mean 'he comes to life,' i.e., a resurrection, or that he just 'shows up?' " Witherington also points out that gospel texts are far less reliant on the observed fact of the Resurrection (there is no angelic command in them like the line in the Gabriel stone) than on the testimony of eyewitnesses to Jesus' post-Resurrection self. Finally, Witherington notes that if he is wrong and Knohl's reading is right, it at least sets to rest the notion that the various gospel quotes attributed to Christ foreshadowing his death and Resurrection were textual retrojections put in his mouth by later believers — Jesus the Messianic Jew, as Knohl sees him, would have been familiar with the vocabulary for his own fate.

Knohl stands by his reading. "The spelling and the phrasing is unique," he told TIME, "but it is similar to to other texts found around the Dead Sea." Yet for now, at least, Gabriel's Revelation must take its place among a slew of recently discovered or rediscovered objects from around the time of Jesus that are claimed to either support or undermine Scripture but are themselves sufficiently, logically or archaeologically compromised to prevent their being definitive. In 2002, a bone-storage box with the legend "James Son of Joseph Brother of Jesus" bobbed up that seemed to buttress Jesus' historicity while at the same time suggest that the Catholic teaching that he had no true brothers was false — but the Israeli Antiquities Authority declared the inscription as a forgery (although various experts continue to disagree). In 2007 the Discovery Channel aired a documentary (funded by *Titanic* director James Cameron) that purported to have located the "Jesus Family Tomb" in the Israeli suburb of Talpiot, with bone boxes with the names "Jesus Son of Joseph," "Mary" and one of the names of Mary Magdalene. If the ossuaries were for the gospel Jesus, his mother and Mary Magdalene, then the implications for Christianity would be dire; but despite considerable initial hoopla, the idea is regarded by many as speculation.

It remains to be seen whether Gabriel's Revelation, and especially Knohl's interpretation, will weather the hot lights of fame. Even the authors of its initial research seem a little dubious about his claims that it is a dry run for the Easter story. But, as often happens in such cases, they seem better disposed to a slightly toned-down assertion: in this case, that the Gabriel tablet does indicate a very rare instance of the idea that a messiah might suffer — a notion introduced in Judaic thought centuries before by the prophet Isaiah but which supposedly went out of style by Jesus' time. If that more modest theory gains traction, it will forge a link

between a trend in first-century Judaism and one of Christianity's galvanizing thoughts — that God might throw in his lot with a suffering or even murdered man — that could contribute to a growing mutual understanding.

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# We visited the site of the century-old burial vaults recently discovered in New York

*Julia Calderone Nov 8, 2015, 8:00 AM*

businessinsider.com.au



Julia Calderone/ Tech InsiderAlyssa Loorya climbs out of the vault entrance.

Archaeologists were working at the site of two burial vaults on Nov. 6, just days after construction workers discovered two chambers of human bones on Nov. 3 and 4 along the eastern edge of New York City's Washington Square Park.

The first vault, which contained scattered skeletal remains, was discovered Nov. 3, when contractors with the Department of Design and Construction began breaking ground to replace a 100-year-old water main with new distribution lines.

The second vault was discovered a day later, which includes an unknown number of bodies enclosed in fully intact wooden coffins.

"Its not unexpected, but it's definitely interesting," Alyssa Loorya, the principle investigator and archaeologist with Chrysalis Archaeological consultants told Tech Insider. "It's not a common find, we don't find this all the time, but we're aware of the history."



*Bones 2*

The New York City Department of Design and ConstructionThe first vault was discovered by city construction workers Nov. 3.

The archaeologists were taking measurements and discussing new ways to photograph the vault's insides, which are currently closed to all foot traffic.

The team has been using high resolution cameras and a rigged lighting system to peer inside. One of their tasks was to measure the vault's size — which Loorya preliminary estimates to be about 15 feet wide.

"Hey, you know what? It's bigger than many studio apartments in the city," Loorya told Tech Insider.



Image010

The New York City Department of Design and ConstructionThe second vault was discovered on Nov. 4.

The two vaults lie adjacent to Washington Square Park, which sits atop an ancient potters field where many indigenous and unknown people were buried in the late 18th and early 19th century.

"After one of the epidemics of yellow fever, they had a decree that anyone who died of yellow fever had to be buried in potter's field because they were so afraid of it," Joan Ageism, an archaeological consultant told Tech Insider.

There was also a church yard on this block, which the vault is likely associated with, though the team isn't sure which church it belongs to.

"The closest thing we know is that it was the Presbyterian Church, possibly," Alex Agran, an archaeologist at Chrysalis Archaeology, told Tech Insider. "That's the most likely candidate, though it's unknown if other churches were sharing the space or not."




Julia Calderone/ Tech InsiderEngineers are discussing the status of the burial site.

The two vaults likely date back to the early 19th century — an estimate based upon the construction of the vault and the style of the coffins. High resolution photos uncovered a hint of a year on a date plate on one of the coffins, Loorya said, which begins with the number 18.

Loorya's team is still trying to get an accurate estimate of the number of bodies in the vault, but they believe that there are most likely between nine to 12 individuals in the first chamber. They are still doing counts for the second.

Julia Calderone/ Tech InsiderAlyssa Loorya climbs out of the vault entrance.



Back in 1965, Con Edison workers had reportedly encountered a burial vault on the same block, though few details of the encounter are known. But they could possibly have been one of the two discovered this week, Agran said.

The city's policy is to leave any human remains unearthed during a construction project untouched, but it's possible that the Con Edison workers had removed some of the bodies from the first vault during that initial discovery.

"The bodies [in the first vault] are kind of jumbled together, there are no intact coffins," Agran said. "In the second chamber, the coffins are pretty much intact."

This may mean that the workers had disturbed the site of the first vault in the 1965 encounter, though this is pure speculation, Agran said.



Julia Calderone/ Tech InsiderJoan Geismar (left) and Alyssa Loorya have just emerged from the vault.

Loorya and her team are currently discussing better options for recording the space, which could include rigging a camera onto a boom to extend further into the vault.

And whether or not this means that there are more bodies lying elsewhere beneath the city is still yet to be determined.

*Burial vault*

"We don't want to speculate how many other bodies might be lying around NYC," Loorya said. "There have been burial grounds found in the city before"


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**Thursday, February 28, 2013**

**"THE WHITE DEATH"**
**The Wellington Avalanche and Railroad Disaster**

On this night – February 28 and March 1, 1910 – one of the most horrific railroad disasters in American history occurred in the Cascade Range of Washington State. It was no surprise that such an event could happen, for the mountains had claimed many lives over the years. The explorers and railroad builders who first came to the region knew that death waited here. As they attempted to conquer the Western mountains, they found that the Cascade Range in Washington was among the greatest challenges they would ever face. They were formidable mountains, shrouded in ice and snow for most of the year, and the steep cliffs and treacherous passes made travel nearly impossible. But they refused to be beaten by nature and the Great Northern Railway, headed by famed railroad magnate James J. Hill, began construction through Stevens Pass in the Cascades in 1891. Workers created a series of switchbacks to carry passengers and freight over the mountain route for several years.

In 1897, work began on the Cascade Tunnel, which would eliminate the switchbacks, reduce the avalanche risk and make the grades much easier to ascend and descend. The two-and-a-half-mile tunnel opened in 1900, although snow slides continued to block the entrances. In addition, the threat of avalanches increased after fire destroyed the timber that provided some protection for the track. But these minor problems were only a prelude to disaster.

But then, 10 years later, an avalanche roared down Windy Mountain near Stevens Pass and swept two Great Northern trains into a ravine, sending 96 victims to their deaths. It was the deadliest snow slide in American history – and one that has left a haunting presence in its wake.



**The depot and bunkhouses at Wellington before the disaster occurred.**
On February 24, 1910, after a snow delay at the east Cascade Mountains town of

Leavenworth, two Great Northern trains, the Spokane Local passenger train No. 25 and Fast Mail train No. 27, traveled west through the mountains toward the coast. There were five or six steam and electric engines, fifteen boxcars, passenger cars, and sleepers. The trains had passed through the Cascade Tunnel from the east to the west side of the mountains, when snow and avalanches forced them to stop near Wellington, in King County. Wellington was a small town populated almost entirely with Great Northern railway employees.

The train stopped under the peak of Windy Mountain, above Tye Creek, where they were forced to wait for plows to clear the tracks. Meanwhile, the snow continued, piling up in five- to eight-foot-deep drifts. Four rotary plows – locomotives with rotating blades on the front that cut through snow and blew it aside – that were sent to clear the tracks ran into difficulty. The first hit a stump on February 25, knocking it out of commission. A second plow became stuck and couldn't refuel on February 27. Snow slides trapped the last two plows. The slides, which were strewn with rocks and timber, had to be cleared by shovel gangs before the plows could go back to work. Unfortunately, Mountain Division supervisor James H. O'Neil had fired the shovelers because of a wage dispute. This left both the rotary crews immobilized while trains No. 25 and No. 27 waited at the siding for six days. When the Wellington telegraph lines went down, cutting off all communication with the outside world, the agitation of the passengers reached its peak.

During the late night of February 28 and early morning hours of March 1, the snow that was falling from the sky turned to rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning. Thunder shook the mountains, stirring loose walls of snow and sending them hurtling down toward the tracks.

Shortly after midnight, Charles Andrews, a Great Northern employee, was walking towards the warmth of one of the Wellington's bunkhouses when he heard a rumble. He turned toward the sound and saw a horrific sight that he would never forget. He later described what he witnessed: "White Death moving down the mountainside above the trains. Relentlessly it advanced, exploding, roaring, rumbling, grinding, snapping -- a crescendo of sound that might have been the crashing of ten thousand freight trains. It descended to the ledge where the side tracks lay, picked up cars and equipment as though they were so many snow-draped toys, and swallowing them up, disappeared like a white, broad monster into the ravine below."



**Photographs of the Wellington Avalanche and the disaster wreaked by the "white cascade" of snow.**



The wall of snow, which was ten feet high and a quarter of a mile wide, crashed down the mountainside. The avalanche swept the passenger train and the mail train into a gulch that was more than one hundred and fifty feet deep. Everyone – passengers, mail workers, Great Northern crew members – were all trapped inside. Some were killed instantly, while others suffocated, buried in the mounds of snow. A surviving train conductor sleeping in one of the mail train cars was thrown from the roof to the floor of the car several times as the train rolled down the slope before it disintegrated when the train slammed against a large tree.

Wellington residents and crew members rushed to the crushed trains that lay far below and over the course of the next few hours, they dig out 23 survivors, many with injuries. As news slowly made its way out of the mountains, hundreds of volunteers and Great Northern employees converged on the scene to dig out the victims. The injured were sent to Wenatchee. The bodies of the dead were transported on toboggans down the west side of the Cascades to trains that carried them to Everett and Seattle. The death toll from the avalanche reached 96 people, including 35 passengers, 58 railroad employees sleeping on the trains and three railroad employees who were sleeping in cabins struck by the wall of snow.



**Bodies of the dead were taken away on toboggans.**



**Corpses stored for identification and burial**



**Rescue and Recovery workers at the Site of the disaster**

An inquest that followed the disaster absolved Great Northern of negligence. Eventually, the courts ruled that the deaths had been caused by an act of God. The immediate cause of the avalanche was the rain and thunder, but the conditions had been set by the earlier forest fire (started by locomotive sparks), which destroyed the shelter that had been provided for the tracks.

It took the Great Northern three weeks to repair the tracks before trains started running again over Stevens Pass. Because the name Wellington became associated with the disaster, the little town was renamed Tye. By 1913, to protect the trains from snow slides, the Great Northern had constructed snow-sheds over the nine miles of tracks between Scenic and Tye. The railroad also built a huge, double-track concrete snow shed in the area of the slide and, in later years, built a second tunnel through Windy Point at the trouble spot, where the slides had occurred. Still, Stevens Pass continued to pose problems for the line. In 1929, Great Northern rerouted its tracks through this troublesome section by constructing an eight-mile-long tunnel through the mountains – the longest railroad tunnel in America – and adding forty miles of tracks.

The old railroad line through Stevens Pass is now the Iron Goat Trail, a hiking trail through the forest with spectacular views of Cascade Mountains scenery. The trail travels past the old snow sheds, the remains of the original tunnel and the frightening ravine where pieces of the wreckage from the two trains still remain.

And if the stories are to be believed, it's not just twisted pieces of metal and remnants of railroad archaeology that remain at this place; some say the ghosts of the avalanche victims remain behind, as well.

Those who have the chance to visit the site of the Wellington disaster say that one can feel a very tangible history at the spot, despite the fact that everything that once existed as Wellington has long since vanished from the map. This is not an easy place to get to since the site is usually buried in snow from October to July in most years but there are many who come – hikers, history buffs, park rangers and ghost enthusiasts among them. And it's not just the ghost hunters who believe this place is haunted. Many of the park rangers won't go to the disaster site – or even into the nearby parking lot – after dark.



**The site of the Wellington Avalanche today is only accessible by the Iron Goat Trail but it is a place that many believe is haunted.**

Many speak of uncomfortable and sometimes oppressive feelings as they navigate the hiking trail, walk through the old snow shed or brave the midday darkness of the crumbling railroad tunnel. But it's not just odd feelings and weird cold spots. Many claim they have heard and seen things here that should not exist – perhaps a little of the disaster victims who have remained behind. Inexplicable voices have sometimes been heard, echoing off the stone walls of the tunnel. On other occasions, these voices have even imprinted themselves on recording devices, offering chills to those who play them back later.

Some claim to have seen the victims of the avalanche. They report glimpses of people walking along the tracks near the site of Wellington where no people were walking before – and they say these mysterious figures vanish without explanation, as if they had never been there at all.

Has the sadness and tragedy of this terrible event left an impression on this place? Many who

have visited here say that it has as it begs to be remembered as one of America's worst railroad disasters.

**The story of the Wellington Avalanche appears in the book AND HELL FOLLOW WITH IT by Troy Taylor and Rene Kruse. It's available in a print edition from the website and in both Kindle and Nook editions.**

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:44 AM

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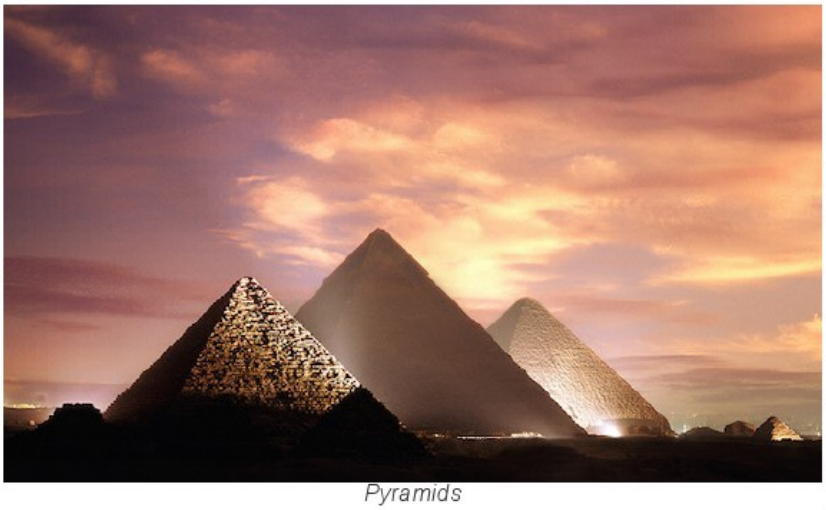
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# Were the Egyptian mummies just scarecrows? Carson's absurd claims about the pyramids.

doubtfulnews.com

**November 5, 2015 • 2 Comments**

So, Republican candidate for President Ben Carson has a very unusual idea about the Egyptian pyramids. What should Americans think about that?



*Pyramids*

It's not debatable that the pyramids were built as tombs for the pharaohs. It's not even a mystery of how they were built. Hint: NOT aliens, but good old manpower, lots of it.

The website Buzzfeed publicized that, in a 1998 speech at Andrews University, a religiously-affiliated college, Ben Carson said, "My own personal theory is that Joseph built the pyramids to store grain."

He also mentioned aliens. "And various of scientists [sic] have said, 'Well, you know there were alien beings that came down and they have special knowledge and that's how, you know, it doesn't require an alien being when God is with you.'"

Pretty much all you can say about that idea is…




*lowellWUT*

We might give him a break on this since it was 17 years ago, but, as goes people who live by the one book, he isn't about to change his mind. He confirmed he still believes this.

Let's try and unpack this a bit. Mmmkay?

First, NO credible scientist has ever said anything about aliens with special knowledge involved in ancient cultures. It's not clear where Carson got that stinker from. (Ancient Aliens didn't debut until 2009. Maybe von Daniken?)

The Forbes piece by bioarchaeologist, Kristina Killgrove, calls out Carson as anti-science – noting his "profound, willful ignorance of science" – and disrespectful of the rich history of the Egyptian people.

Carson is a biblical literalist, which is extremely problematic in many respects, least of which

is it makes ZERO sense in terms of history and science. It also lacks internal consistency. Carson isn't embarrassed by that, but he *should* be.

> "Some people believe in the Bible like I do and don't find that to be silly at all, and believe that God created the earth and don't find that to be silly at all," Carson said. "The secular progressives try to ridicule it every time it comes up and they're welcome to do that."

Hmm, maybe he needs to study the Bible a bit more.

Carson thinks that because the chambers were hermetically sealed, that they would be good to store grain. But they WEREN'T hermetically sealed, for a start. They are kind of awful for storing anything in bulk, really. They aren't hollow. Check out this piece by Jason Colavito who explains how Carson's ideas are "medieval".

DN contacted our "consulting" archeologist, Jeb Card who says that non-Egyptians like the Greeks through to the Renaissance had an obsession with Egypt as origin of ancient wisdom. With the Enlightenment and the beginning of actual archaeological investigation at the end of the eighteenth century, many of the legends that had built up around Egypt began to fall apart. Those legends became symbols of resistance to the Enlightenment and materialism, which is why Egypt featured so heavily in occult ideas in the 19th century, and subsequently were seen associated with paranormal ideas in the 20th and 21st centuries.

"Because Egypt is in the Bible," he continues, "and because Biblical literalism rejects the Enlightenment, we've had the continued obsession with Egypt as imagined by medieval Europeans."

Even though actual archaeological research was conducted to get at the real history, these unorthodox ideas didn't disappear.

"This is the archaeological equivalent of Creationism, a rejection of modernity." Card notes that the pyramids serve a similar purpose as a symbol of the ancient past to the European/Christian perspective as the dinosaurs do to Creationists. Controlling the narrative of those symbols is critical to that particular worldview.

Card concludes that Carson really *does* believe this and willingly promotes it because the idea appeals to evangelicals who make up an important part of the GOP primary voting base. Note how he attacked "secular progressives" in his reaffirmation of this stance. That was deliberate.

All experts dismiss Carson's view as absurd. In that light, the Guardian has a great piece that suggests maybe the mummies were there to act as scarecrows to protect the grain. Yeah, it's ludicrous, just like many pseudo-archeological ideas.

This should really not be an argument about the Bible or religion, but in taking those concepts to an extreme view, making them totally absurd.

In conclusion, there is almost no alternative to reply to this claim except with derision —

although you can try reason, it likely won't work. Pyramids as silos has NO support, just wishful, fantastical thinking, and it is deliberately ignorant. I guess some people are OK voting for a person to be President who is willfully ignorant of facts and will not change his mind in the face of evidence. We've been through that before – it cost thousands of lives. Care to go there again?

Being an idiot should not be a quality that we look upon favorably in our leaders.

**2 comments for "Were the Egyptian mummies just scarecrows? Carson's absurd claims about the pyramids."**

1. Victoria
November 5, 2015 at 5:57 PM

Ben Carson's ego is so big that he doesn't think he is wrong about anything, and so he doesn't even have the decency to check out any of his ideas or be just a bit embarrassed when he sees how stupid they look when analyzed by others.

This is the man, after all, who marvels aloud that "God" knew he (Carson) was going to make a career out of separating babies and that's how Carson got his middle name of Solomon. "God", and not his parents, named him? He then, of course, implies that he is as wise as Solomon, too.

I wonder if he has delusions of grandeur. He reminds me of patients I've treated on psych wards.

- fredthechemist
November 5, 2015 at 6:35 PM

Delusions of adequacy, maybe.

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# What caused the First World War?

*Wednesday 1st April 2015*



As part of our 'History Extra explains' series, leading historians answer the burning questions you were too afraid to ask...



*5 October 1917: supporting troops of the 1st Australian Division walking near Hooge, Ypres. (Frank Hurley/Hulton Archive/Getty)*

This is a hotly disputed question. At the time, the Germans tended to blame the selfish ambitions particularly of Britain and Russia, while the Allies tended to blame German militarism and aggressive expansionism.

Other historians blame a collective failure of will by all countries to maintain the peace: either all are equally to blame or else they all blindly 'sleepwalked' into war without realising what they were doing.

More cynical commentators see the war as the result of colonialist rivalry – a war of expansion on both sides in which the western allies, despite denouncing German expansion, expanded their own empires significantly.

Others again see the First World War as the result of capitalist expansion, in which the ostensible causes were mere excuses for profiteering at the expense of the lives of the working people of all the combatant countries.

**Seán Lang is a senior lecturer in history at Anglia Ruskin University, and the author of First World War for Dummies.**

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Engineers at CalTech discovered that for sand dunes to produce sound they need a dry layer on top that amplifies internal frequencies during sand movement. Christopher Intagliata reports.

By Christopher Intagliata | November 11, 2015

<<Dune sounds>> The sound of supernatural spirits talking? Well, no. But that's what it sounded like to Marco Polo as he travelled through China's Lop Desert in the 13th century. He also described the sound as "a variety of musical instruments." And in reality, the mysterious noises *are* the product of what could be considered to be an unusual sort of instrument—the desert's sand dunes. <<dune sound>>

"And it's a sound that's very similar to kind of the tones you'd get on a cello." Melany Hunt, a mechanical engineer at Caltech. The dunes sing when sand avalanches down the side, "which would then be somewhat equivalent to using the bow on the strings of the cello."

Hunt and her colleagues recorded the sounds produced closer to home, by California's Kelso and Eureka Dunes. They used four dozen geophones—microphones you stick in sand. And they mapped the dunes' structure with ground penetrating radar. Turns out, dunes that sing are built differently from silent dunes—they're topped with an even layer of *dry sand*—about five feet thick—on top of all the damp sand below. And that layer of dry sand is like the body of an instrument—it traps and amplifies certain frequencies more than others. "And so really the size of the instrument is really going to set the range of frequencies that you get. And that's the same thing with this dune."

When sand avalanches, it shoots off sound waves of various frequencies. Those waves travel through the dry sand, hit the wet layer, bounce back, hit the air on top of the dune, bounce back, and so on. As that happens, a lot of the frequencies cancel out and dissipate. But certain waves have the goldilocks frequency, around 80 Hertz. As they travel back and forth, they amplify, creating that booming sound. The study is in the journal *Physics of Fluids*. [N.M. Vriend et al, Linear and nonlinear wave propagation in booming sand dunes]

The bad news? Since the 'instrument' requires a uniform, thick layer of dry sand, Hunt says the dunes tend to fall quiet in the cooler, wetter months. Meaning you'll have to brave summer heat if you want to hear the dunes when they're really in tune.

—Christopher Intagliata

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# What Vampire Graves Tell Us About Ancient Superstitions

*Emily Anne Epstein*

theatlantic.com

Hundreds of years ago, ignorance about decomposition and disease sparked fears that the dead returned to drink the blood of the living.

- Olga Khazan
- Oct 28, 2013

In 1846, a man named Horace Ray died of tuberculosis in Griswold, Connecticut. Within the next six years, two of his grown sons died of the same disease. When yet another son fell ill two years later, Ray's family and friends could think of only one explanation: The dead sons were somehow feeding on and sickening the living one—from the afterlife. In an effort to keep the remaining son from getting even worse, they exhumed the dead sons' bodies and burned them.

This wasn't an isolated incident. In 1874, a Rhode Island man named William Rose dug up his own daughter's body and burned her heart, and in 1875 a victim of "consumption," as TB was called then, had her lungs burned posthumously for good measure.

This practice of digging up, burning, or otherwise attempting to restrain the deceased was a widespread practice in many Western countries until the early 20th century, and it was intended to prevent what people at the time thought of as vampires: Dead victims of disease that literally sucked the life out of the living from beyond the grave.

These 16th-century remains of a woman
with a brick stuck between her jaws
were unearthed in 2006 in Italy. (AP)

We now imagine vampires as blood-drinking, cloaked Counts—or possibly sparkly, sexy teenagers—but throughout history everyone from the Ancient Greeks, to the Eastern Europeans, to 19th-century Americans saw them as disease victims (and sometimes simply dead miscreants) who could prey on the living from the Great Beyond.

To keep these fiends from feasting on their villages, the surviving relatives would try to physically keep them in their graves, sort of like setting up an obstacle course for the deceased.

Last year, Bulgarian archaeologists found two skeletons whose chests had been impaled with iron rods near the Black Sea town of Sozopol—apparently a typical treatment for those suspected of post-mortal malfeasance until the early 1900s there. About 100 such skeletons have been uncovered in Bulgaria alone.

This summer in Poland, researchers unearthed remains that had their heads removed and placed in their laps—possibly a sign that whoever buried them wanted to hinder any potential future resurrection by making the vampire find its head first.

One Italian village even buried a suspected vampire with a brick in her mouth.

**It's a Spooky World**



Part of the reason the myth persisted, it seemed, was widespread confusion over what happens to people after they die. The pagan Slavs obviously didn't know about decomposition, but even centuries later, people might have been misled by the fact that rigor mortis eventually gives way to flexible limbs, making a corpse seem more lifelike than dead-like. Similarly, a digestive tract's decaying ooze might have looked like fresh blood to an unwitting villager, and burial shrouds sometimes snagged on the corpses' teeth, making them appear to be partially eaten. (Some believe this is why in *Ulysses*, when Stephen sees what he believes is an apparition, he cries, "Ghoul! Chewer of Corpses!")

Eventually, similar fears migrated to the New World. During tuberculosis epidemics, 19th-century New Englanders began to notice that the relatives of TB victims began to sicken and waste away after their loved one's death. This was before germ theory took hold, so one popular explanation was that the deceased TB victims were rising from the dead to suck the life out of their loved ones. One Connecticut town, for example, thought the solution was to exhume the remains of the dead relative and arrange the remains in a skull-and-crossbones pattern.

The Scottish writer Emily Gerard first documented the Eastern European myths that gave rise to the vampire-burial practices in a 1885 article called "Transylvanian Superstitions:"

> These restless spirits, called Strigoi, are not malicious, but their appearance bodes no good, and may be regarded as omens of sickness or misfortune. More decidedly evil, however, is the vampire, or nosferatu, in whom every Roumenian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven or hell.

In 1897, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, which was based partly on Gerard's work, as well as the 1931 film adaptation, cemented the pasty, bloody-fanged vampire we know today into pop horror consciousness.

It was clear that by then, however, vampires were becoming more of a myth than an actual menace. In a review of *Dracula* published in 1897, *The Guardian* explained that Count Dracula "is unable to die properly, but from century to century resuscitates his life of the 'Un-Dead'...by nightly draughts of blood from the throats of living victims, with the appalling consequence that those once so bitten must become vampires in their turn."

The newspaper praised Stoker as a powerful author, but it dismissed his genre of choice:

"It is, however, a mistake to fill a whole volume with horrors."

# What was the ‘North Sea Outrage’?



Also known as the ‘Dogger Bank Incident’ and described in the immediate aftermath as “The Russians’ Mad Midnight Murder”, this event brought Britain to the brink of war with Russia



*One of the fishermen tries to signal to the firing Russian ship*

At midnight on 21 October 1904, Hull’s ‘Gamecock Fleet’ of around 50 fishing vessels was at work in the North Sea, near a spot named Dogger Bank, when it accidentally got caught in the middle of the Russo-Japanese War.

The men, while gutting the day’s catches, saw the bright lights of large nearby warships and, believing them to be part of the British fleet on manoeuvres, gathered to watch the spectacle.

Only when shots began to tear through the defenceless trawlers did the crews realise that the warships were not British, nor were they firing blanks. Two men were decapitated, around 30 injured – some losing limbs – and one trawler was sunk.

In the chaos of the salvo, Russian ships actually fired on each other, resulting in the deaths of two of their own sailors.

Around 20 minutes later, the firing stopped. The Russian forces responsible claimed they had mistaken the trawlers for Imperial Japanese Navy ships, but the “senseless” attack provoked a major diplomatic dispute and Britain geared up for war.

The case was defused in February 1905 when an international inquiry decreed that the incident resulted from confusion, not calculation.

**Answered by one of our Q&A experts, Emily Brand. For more fascinating questions by Emily, and the rest of our panel, pick up a copy of *History Revealed*! Available in print and for digital devices.**

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# When body snatching came to 1840s St. Louis : Entertainment

*By Christie D'Zurilla Los Angeles Times (TNS)*
*October 25, 2015 5:30 am*

stltoday.com

2015-10-25T05:30:00Z 2015-10-27T15:07:03Z When body snatching came to 1840s St. LouisBy Jane Henderson
St. Louis Post-Dispatch stltoday.com




A drawing of "grave-robbers at work" from the 1878 book "A Tour of St. Louis" by Joseph A. Dacus and James W. Buel. Courtesy Missouri History Museum

***Editor's note:*** *An early version of this story had one reference incorrectly identifying Dr. McDowell's first name. His name was Joseph. He had a son named John.*

“Rest in peace” was no idle wish in 1840s St. Louis.

Body snatching had come to town.

Like a horror tale akin to “Frankenstein,” graves were rifled not just for jewelry or other shiny goods, but for something far more gruesome: fresh corpses.

In time for the annual holiday that celebrates the macabre, a new book investigates the life of a creepy yet important citizen who deserves to be better known in the city’s history files.

“Joseph Nash McDowell was nuts,” Victoria Cosner says. Enough bones were found in his basement to fill three wagons.

The bones themselves, though, weren’t really evidence of an unstable nature. McDowell was, after all, a surgeon, opening the first medical school in St. Louis (probably the first west of the Mississippi River). Acquiring bodies for dissection class was a necessary part of instruction.

In fact, “grave robbing was a class requirement,” according to “Missouri’s Mad Doctor McDowell” by Cosner and Lorelei Shannon (History Press, 142 pages, $21.99; paper). Their white-maned subject also exhibited, though, a surplus of “eccentricities,” as his generous peers put it at the time.

Besides believing that the ghost of his mother once saved him, McDowell kept a bear in his medical college and perhaps hundreds of ancient guns. He even mounted a cannon he said came from a pirate ship. When a mob objected to his body snatching, the doctor may have released the bear on the crowd. He seemed paranoid about a rival school and sometimes wore a breastplate for protection. After the Civil War, McDowell, a Confederate, created a room called Hell that included a rattlesnake, an alligator and an effigy of Abraham Lincoln.

Probably his most ghoulish act, though, was to entomb his own 14-year-old daughter in a copper cylinder filled with alcohol. He bought a cave in Hannibal and hung the corpse in it, trying to preserve Amanda's body.

**TWAIN CONNECTION**

The cave is now known as the Mark Twain Cave, and guides talk about unrest in Hannibal when "townsfolk realized the girl hadn't been given a Christian burial," the book says. Some guides claim to have seen Amanda's ghost, Cosner says. "Amanda's story was well-known at the time it happened and has stayed part of the mythology of Hannibal and St. Louis for over 170 years," the authors write.

The corpse, a draw for local children who tried to open the coffin, was recorded in Mark Twain's nonfiction. McDowell himself may have inspired a cemetery scene in "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" in which a Dr. Robinson has hired Injun Joe and Muff Potter to dig up a body.

Cosner is certain that Twain knew of McDowell by name and based Dr. Robinson on the St. Louis surgeon: "Sure as I can be without a note from Mark Twain."

Other writers have examined McDowell before, but Cosner wanted to work backward from the legends and ghost stories connected with him to find the "true crime" story. She and co-author Shannon cite dozens of books and journal articles in their bibliography. The slim paperback highlights McDowell's loathsome aspects, although it acknowledges that he was considered a superior surgeon and a mesmerizing teacher.

Shannon, who lives in Washington state, met Cosner when they were high school students in Arizona. Their first book together was another true crime work called "Mad Madame Lalaurie: New Orleans' Most Famous Murderess Revealed." They'll discuss their recent work this week at Subterranean Books.

Cosner, administrator at the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site, is especially proud of her research into the connection between Twain's and McDowell's families. She documents how McDowell had cousins named Nash in Hannibal, and that one of his own sons, John, boarded with Twain's uncle, Jim Lampton. John McDowell is even buried with the Lamptons rather than with the McDowells.

Joseph McDowell, his first wife and several children now permanently reside in Bellefontaine Cemetery. McDowell, however, apparently first buried his wife, Amanda Virginia, and some of his young children in a cemetery mound in Illinois. (The bodies were moved to Bellefontaine when the mound was destroyed in 1867.) Supposedly, McDowell would gaze at the Indian mound from his college at Eighth and Gratiot streets.

**TRANSYLVANIA U. GRAD**

The doctor, born in Kentucky, came to St. Louis about 1839 to teach at Kemper College. He had graduated, interestingly enough, from Transylvania University in Kentucky. In 1840, he

founded the medical department at Kemper and several years later erected an imposing new building for his own Missouri Medical College. (St. Louis Medical College was founded in 1841 and became affiliated with St. Louis University. Together these two medical schools would eventually become part of Washington University.)

After the Civil War broke out, McDowell left town to fight on the side of the rebels, and his medical college was taken over by the Union to become the Gratiot Street Prison (the building is long gone; it stood near the current Ralston Purina headquarters).

The prison of course, has its own history of ghosts and gruesome stories, beginning with a list of items taken from the college, including 44 skulls and “180 lots of wet specimens in jars.” Unfortunately, many files and papers from the medical school were apparently discarded.

When soldiers cleared it out, they loaded wagons full of old bones, Cosner says. With the development of medical schools, “ever more cadavers were required for medical experimentation and exploration,” write Cosner and Shannon. Early Missouri law allowed for hanged criminals to be used for dissection, but by 1835 the state outlawed removing bodies from graves for sale or dissection, terming the act a misdemeanor.

That didn’t end the practice. The most frequently stolen bodies were of paupers, transients or enslaved people — people without powerful relatives to object to their treatment or the means to protect the grave (Britain still has examples of cages placed over graves). “Missouri’s Mad Doctor McDowell” says that despite the doctor’s “pilfering of graveyards,” he would lecture students to show respect for the bodies, saying “this isn’t a butcher shop.”

McDowell’s college wasn’t the only medical school to obtain corpses. In 1884, an anonymous correspondent in the Post-Dispatch wrote a “Reminiscence of the Flourishing Days of Grave-Robbery in St. Louis” and detailed how medical students before 1870 would “chip in and make up $10, which was given to the (medical college) janitor, who never failed to provide them a corpse for that amount.” The anecdote is under the subhead “Pope’s College,” another name for St. Louis Medical College, whose early dean was Dr. Charles Alexander Pope.

Kenneth Winn, former Missouri state archivist, is also working on a book about McDowell, whom Winn believes should be better known:

“When McDowell gets his due, he will be on the map.” Winn sees the doctor as less “mad” and more a product of his time.

“He’s more of a loudmouth who didn’t care what he said,” especially about his hatred of Catholics, blacks and immigrants, but that wasn’t unusual then, Winn says.

“He was very sympathetic toward woman” and would treat poor people for free, he says. In addition, McDowell’s competitive dislike of other medical colleges was also common at that time, when doctors had even been known to get into fisticuffs. “It was a tough period.”

**RESPECTED DOCTOR**

Christopher Gordon, director, library and collections, at the Missouri History Museum, believes McDowell might be better known if his medical records hadn't been lost when the college became a prison.

"I think people don't realize how well-respected he was in the medical community. ... Many of his students went on to become very respected physicians here. He laid the base for the medical community in St. Louis."But Gordon also believes the doctor "probably suffered from some kind of paranoia. ... There was definitely something wrong there."

He says St. Louis' most famous case of grave robbery involved Pope's college and a "resurrectionist" named Ernest Doepke. "He was caught red-handed."

Like Winn, Gordon points to anatomical boards and the American Medical Association for helping bring better ethics and more volunteer donations to medical schools.

And yet, ghouls still appeal to popular culture. Joseph Nash McDowell made an appearance in the 2012 movie "Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter," in which the St. Louis doctor supplied blood to the thirsty ones.

McDowell, 63, died in 1868 from a pedestrian cause: pneumonia. As a Halloween tale, though, his life fits the season well enough.

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**Thursday, February 7, 2013**

On the day when the state of Illinois is planning earthquake drills in schools across the state, it's fitting that today's post concerns the greatest earthquakes to ever shake the eastern United States – the New Madrid Earthquakes of the winter of 1811-1812. The earthquakes began in December and continued over the next few months, culminating in a massive shaking on February 7, 1812.

Over the course of that winter, a series of devastating quakes shook the nation from southeastern Missouri to Boston, New Orleans and Washington. Centered in the Mississippi Valley region, they were the strongest known seismic events in North America, east of the Rocky Mountains. They are known today as the New Madrid earthquakes due to their horrible effects on the small town of New Madrid, Missouri. They caused destruction like nothing never seen, before or since, and gave rise to incredible accounts of bizarre events.

Strange things began to happen in the Missouri Territory in 1811. Residents along the Mississippi River, near the settlement of New Madrid, began reporting all manner of weird happenings. First, it was the animals. Livestock began to act nervous and excited. Dogs began to bark and howl and even the most domesticated of animals turned vicious. Wild animals began to act tame. Deer wandered out of the woods and up to the doors of cabins. Flocks of ducks and geese landed near people. It was unlike anything the local residents had ever seen before. Soon, stories spread of eerie lights that were seen in the woods and in the hills. Strange, bluish white flashes and balls of light were seen floating in the trees and cresting the nearby ridges.

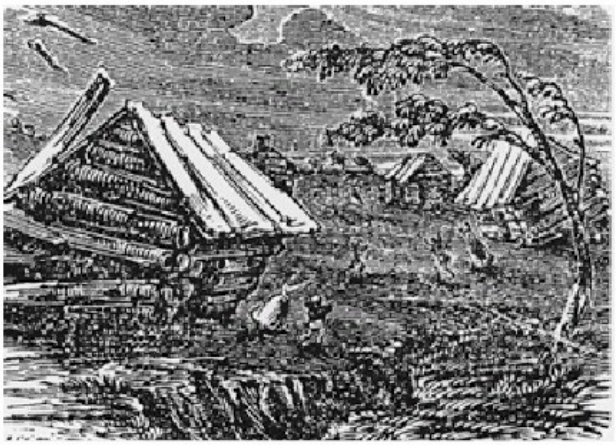
Perhaps strangest of all, especially to the more superstitious among the settlers, was the comet that had been seen in the sky for months. In the fall of 1811, it was at its brightest and in September of that year, this anomaly in the sky was joined by a solar eclipse that led some to believe that a dire event was coming soon. And they were right.



**According to witness accounts, the New Madrid Earthquake caused the Mississippi River to run backward for a time.**

The New Madrid earthquakes began at about 2:00 a.m. on the morning of December 16, 1811. The ground shook and heaved like waves on the ocean and the violent shock was accompanied by a loud sound like distant thunder, but more hoarse and vibrating, witnesses said. One eyewitness later wrote that the thundering sound was “followed in a few minutes by the complete saturation of the atmosphere, with sulphurous vapor, causing total darkness. The screams of the affrighted inhabitants running to and fro, not knowing where to go, or what to do - the cries of the fowls and beasts of every species - the cracking of trees falling, and the roaring of the Mississippi formed a scene truly horrible.”

The violent trembling caused roofs to collapse, chimneys to fall, items in homes to be thrown about and numerous injuries. Rocks and dirt collapsed along the bluffs of the Mississippi and in some places, sand and water were forced to the surface in frightening eruptions. In the darkness before dawn, no one had any idea just how much damage was being done.



**The New Madrid Earthquake caused an unbelievable amount of damage, but it would have been much worse if the region had not been so sparsely populated in 1812.**

Between the initial earthquake and sunrise, a number of lighter shocks occurred. They were followed by another violent shaking just as the sun as coming up. The terror that had taken over the local populace, as well as the animals in the region, was now, if possible, doubled.

People began to flee in every direction, perhaps believing that there was less danger if they could get away from the river. Many were injured, not only from the shock of the earthquakes, but in their haste in trying to escape.

Thousands of minor shocks and occasional stronger earthquakes were experienced during the following days and weeks. On January 23, 1812, at about 9:00 a.m., an earthquake comparable to the one in December took place. It was reportedly felt as far away as Boston. According to many accounts, the earth remained in continual agitation until February 4, when another strong quake occurred. Four events took place over the course of the next few days and then on February 7, around 4:00 a.m., the most violent concussion shook the region. One witness, Eliza Bryan wrote: “The awful darkness of the atmosphere, and the violence of the tempestuous thundering noise that accompanied it, together with all of the other phenomena mentioned as attending the former ones, formed a scene, the description of which would require the most sublimely fanciful imagination.”

It was as if the gates of hell had opened in the Mississippi River Valley.

The earthquake caused two waterfalls to form on the Mississippi River near New Madrid and, for a short while, the Mississippi River ran backward until the mighty force of the water caused the falls to collapse. At first, the river had seemed to recede from its banks, and its waters gathered up in the center, leaving many boats stranded on bare sand. The water then rose fifteen to twenty feet in the air and then expanded, causing it to rapidly rush toward the shore and overflow the river’s banks. The boats that had been left on the sand were torn from their moorings and driven more than one-quarter mile up a small creek. The river fell rapidly, as quickly as it had risen, and receded from the banks in such a torrent that it ripped away whole groves of cottonwood trees that had been growing along the shore. They were broken off with such precision that in some instances, people who had not witnessed the event, refused to believe they had not been cut. Thousands of fish were stranded on the banks, left behind by the surging water. The river drowned the inhabitants of a Native American village, devastated thousands of acres of forest and created Reelfoot Lake, about fifteen miles south of New Madrid.



**The land shifted in such a way that an entire lake, Reelfoot Lake, was created in**

**western Tennessee, about 15 miles south along the river from New Madrid.**
During the hard shocks, the earth was torn to pieces. Hundreds of acres were covered over, in various depths, by the sand that came out of the fissures, great, yawning gaps that opened up all over the countryside. Some of them closed immediately after vomiting up sand and water, but others remained as open wounds in fields, pastures and forests.



**Photographs taken many years after the earthquakes occurred still showed the tremendous damage that was done in the winter of 1811-1812.**



After the February 7 earthquake, only weaker aftershocks took place, which still occur today.

No white settlers were reported killed during the earthquakes of 1811-1812, but many towns and cities experienced damage from the shaking ground. It is believed that the damage and death toll would have been much higher, perhaps at catastrophic levels, if the region had been more heavily populated at the time. In 1811, that portion of the Mississippi Valley was still sparsely inhabited frontier. If the area had been as populated as it is today, the New Madrid earthquakes would have been one of the worst disasters in American history.

Terrifyingly, there is still a chance of this happening. Minor tremors still occur along what is known as the New Madrid Fault Line on an almost daily basis and scientists believe that another major quake is inevitable. When it happens, the devastation could be the greatest ever seen in American history. Towns, cities, factories and oil refineries that have been built along the Mississippi River are woefully ill-prepared for the kind of earthquakes that occurred in 1812. Scientists say that it's not a matter of IF such an earthquake will occur – it's a matter

of WHEN.

But when that might happen is anyone's guess.

Posted by Troy Taylor at 9:42 AM

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# Why Urban Legends at Colleges Live On

*David Barno and Nora Bensahel*

theatlantic.com

From zombie monkeys to phantom anatomy professors, these stories play an important role, in spirit.



- Li Zhou
- Oct 31, 2015

Legend has it that the forests surrounding Reed College in Portland, Oregon, are home to not only standard flora and fauna, but also a slightly lesser known species: zombie monkeys. The mutant albino monkeys are rumored to be the former subjects of a psychology professor's secret experiments in his underground lab. At some point, the primates were allegedly freed by an animal-rights activist group and now run amok in the canyon beside the school's campus—potential threats to students wandering around a little too late at night.

Meanwhile, near Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, a Loch-Ness-like creature (lovingly nicknamed Champ) has reportedly been spotted in the depths of Lake Champlain over the years, becoming a local attraction. And at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, a duck spirit is thought to roam the halls and block the refrigerator doors of unsuspecting freshmen students trying to drink beer. Many colleges across the country have their own version of a lurking zombie monkey, sea monster, or duck (and in some cases, the all-too-real rumor of human-size cockroaches or rats roaming the halls). And that's on top of the myriad tales of haunted dorms and classrooms. At Emory University, for example, a playful ghost named Dooley who died from alcoholism and went on to teach anatomy using his bones, is such a household name that stuffed animals of his skeletal likeness are sold at the campus bookstore and a spirit week every spring claims him as mascot, according to Elizabeth Tucker's *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses*.

Simon Bronner, an American studies and folklore professor at Penn State Harrisburg, says such urban legends emerge on campuses as a manifestation of student anxiety about the college experience—often serving as an outlet through which they can express their fears about being away from home. In other words, they're often a means students can use to acknowledge and contain this apprehension without having to be completely vulnerable about it. Bronner, who authored the book *Campus Traditions: Folklore from the Old-Time College to the Modern Mega-University*, cites legends that center on romantic relationships and roommates as cases when the stories function as stand-ins for students' own fears. "Telling them is partly ritual, partly humorous," he says. "Students are using that frame of lore to raise issues about aging, about where they are on a strange place on their own for the first time." Many of the college legends—which may warn against partying too much or caving to

academic pressures or even staying out so late a zombie monkey might appear—are "cautionary tales" that provide nuggets of "cultural advice," he says.

According to Bronner, these stories—most of which are similar to oral histories in that they're passed down verbally, through bits and pieces that people have heard, told and retold by peers—also help students to foster connections with both classmates and the institution itself. Through interviews conducted for his *Campus Traditions* book, Bronner found that many of these tales are perpetuated during late-night conversations in the dorms. "Often, students are strangers to one another—and they're sharing information and stories with one another as a way to not only report what they've heard about the campus, but also to get commentary," he says. "It's often an open-ended statement like, 'Do you believe what happened?' or 'That's what I heard.'"

In some instances, stories that calcify into legend are borne from a kernel of truth and connected to a historical event, serving as a way for students to feel closer to the heritage of a school or better understand it. At Georgetown University, the fifth floor of the Healy Building is rumored to be sealed because an exorcism took place there (the same one that inspired the *The Exorcist,* later partly filmed on campus), when in fact there is evidence that such an event once occurred at the school's hospital in 1949. At Sweet Briar College, Daisy Williams —the real daughter of the school's founder who died at a young age after being stricken with pneumonia—is a ghost who's believed to watch over the school and appear during times of need to take care of the campus and its students, including after a devastating fire in 1927. The act of telling (and partly believing) these stories becomes a college tradition in itself, says Bronner, forming bonds between generations of students who attend these institutions.

"Another aspect of the supernatural is that many college campuses are on locations occupied by ancient visitors or stories of the dead, including Native American areas," he notes. Tucker also addresses these ghost stories in her book, and says in a recent *Vice* story that the presence of Native American ghosts can symbolize the ongoing guilt that people continue to feel about the oppression these populations faced and serve as a persistent reminder to reckon with a place's history.

Other legends—particularly those involving statues—may help students feel a sense of control amid the uncertainty they are experiencing during the tumult of college. At Columbia University, as the story goes, the first student in each class to spot the owl on the main courtyard's Alma Mater statue is guaranteed the status of valedictorian. During finals season, students at the University of Maryland-College Park offer food sacrifices to the Terrapin statue, Testudo, in the hopes of good grades, also touching his nose for good fortune before athletic events. "There are a lot of statues that are rubbed for luck for exams and wins on games," Bronner says. "A lot of those are because of insuring success."

Ultimately, urban legends take on a unique role at college because of how they reflect and respond to the contradictions young adults are facing at that point in their lives—when they feel simultaneously strong, youthful, and vibrant as well as vulnerable and insecure at the same time, says Bronner. "This paradox," he continues, "is often resolved through the supernatural."

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## Wisconsin convent says prayer has gone on nonstop since 1878 yahoo.com

By CARRIE ANTLFINGER November 5, 2015 7:25 AM

LA CROSSE, Wis. (AP) — Flooding, snowstorms, a flu outbreak, even a fire — any of those might have slowed a group of Wisconsin nuns who say none of it has kept their order from praying nonstop for hundreds of thousands of people over the last 137 years.

The La Crosse-based Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration claim to have been praying night and day for the ill and the suffering longer than anyone in the United States — since 11 a.m. on Aug. 1, 1878.

"When I walk into the chapel I can feel this tangible presence kind of hit (me)," said Sister Sarah Hennessey, who helps coordinate the prayers.

The tradition of perpetual Eucharistic adoration — uninterrupted praying before what is believed to be the body of Christ — dates to 1226 in France, according to Sister Marlene Weisenbeck. Catholic orders around the world have done it since then. It grew in popularity in 19th century and again under Pope John Paul II, said Father Steven Avella, a history professor at Marquette University.

In La Crosse, the nuns estimate they've prayed for hundreds of thousands of people, including 150,000 in the last decade.

"Sometimes it's overwhelming with the pain that people have and the illnesses that they are suffering," said Donna Benden, who is among 180 lay people known as "prayer partners" who help the 100 sisters. Benden prays from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. every Wednesday before going to work.

View gallery
In this Oct. 14, 2015 photo, prayer request forms are seen outside the office of Sister Sarah Hennes …

The order started asking for community help in 1997, when the number of nuns began dwindling. Nowadays, the sisters usually take night shifts and lay people cover the day, according to Sister Maria Friedman, who schedules two people for every hour. "Even the sisters go away frequently or take on other tasks, it's the complexity of modern life," she said.

She said she's constantly trying to find ways to make it easier, like getting a bed on campus where lay people can sleep. If necessary, the sisters will find more creative solutions. "We will make it work," she said.

Other U.S. orders also pray 24 hours, seven days a week, like the 16 nuns who take two-hour shifts at Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Cleveland, Ohio. Their order has done so in the U.S. since 1921, a carryover from an effort that began in 1856 in France, according to that order's Sister Mary Thomas. One or two nuns are there at all times, with no help from lay people. Some orders, though, have scaled back to part-time because of aging nuns or other

reasons.

Since the La Crosse nuns began, they've prayed through a fire in an adjacent building in 1923, a flood in La Crosse in 1965, the flu and many storms. Sister Hennessey compiles the requests for each day from paper slips people leave in person, phone calls, emails and online forms.

On the list recently was Laura Huber, 52, a principal of two La Crosse-area schools, who was diagnosed with breast cancer 10 months ago. A school board member requested the prayers for her, she said.

"The prayer sustained me in ways I haven't been able to articulate," she said, adding, "I felt warm and loved and cared about by strangers and that's an incredible feeling."

Sister Friedman says she never has problems finding people to help. She has a list of substitutes, but the prayer partners and nuns often take extra hours.

"If it's 11 o'clock at night and it's my hour and another sister doesn't show up, I can't just go to bed," said Sister Hennessey. "You're like, 'It's 137 years — I have to stay awake.'"

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# Witch wins protective order against warlock in Salem court

yahoo.com

By COLLIN BINKLEY October 28, 2015 7:02 PM



*Witch priestess Lori Sforza, seeking a restraining order against self-described warlock Christian Day, testifies in district court Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2015, in Salem, Mass. Sforza had accused Day of harassing her over the phone and on social media over the past three years. The judge granted a protective order against Day, who said he would appeal the ruling. (Pat Greenhouse/The Boston Globe via AP, Pool)*

Witch priestess Lori Sforza, seeking a restraining order against self-described warlock Christian Day, …

BOSTON (AP) — A judge granted a protective order against a warlock on Wednesday, spelling relief for the Salem witch who accused him of harassment.

The two squared off in court before a Salem District Court judge, who granted the protective order to witch priestess Lori Sforza. She had accused self-proclaimed warlock Christian Day of harassing her over the phone and on social media over the past three years.

During testimony that at times became heated, Sforza accused Day of making incessant phone calls at night and humiliating her on Facebook, The Boston Globe reported. Day's lawyer countered that the dispute stems from a onetime business partnership that fell apart years ago.

Before 2012, Day let Sforza perform psychic readings rent-free at one of his occult shops in Salem, he told The Associated Press in an interview after the hearing. Their relationship fell apart when Sforza revealed plans to start her own witchcraft shop nearby, Day said. The two are still business rivals.

"This is a business dispute gone wrong. That's all it was," Day said. "They don't want me to make snide remarks on Facebook; I won't make snide remarks on Facebook."

During the hearing, Sforza reportedly told the judge that she can see into her own future, saying, "That's why I'm here today." Sforza, 75, uses the business name Lori Bruno and says she is a psychic witch who descends from a line of Italian witches. She also leads a pagan church in Salem.

Day, 45, who now lives in Louisiana, owns occult shops in Salem and New Orleans. Described on his website as the "world's best-known warlock," he organizes the Festival of the Dead in Salem, a series of Halloween events every October that culminates in a Witches' Halloween Ball.

The pair made headlines in 2011 when they cast spells together to try to heal actor Charlie Sheen, who had called himself a "Vatican assassin warlock" during an interview on national television.

The judge hearing the case said he was dismayed by the volume of late-night calls Day made to Sforza. After hearing the decision, Day, who didn't testify, denied making the calls and then

stormed out of the courthouse, according to The Globe. He told reporters he would appeal the order.

"I'm going to fight this every step of the way because it's unjust," he said.

Salem, home of the 17th-century witch trials, has a tourism industry built around the occult that reaches fever pitch in October, drawing thousands of visitors.

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# Germany: Woman sitting on park bench dies after 'spontaneous human combustion'

*By Mark Piggott | International Business Times – Wed, Nov 4, 2015* news.yahoo.com




*Flensburg Germany spontaneous human combustion*

A Mauritius-born woman, who apparently burst into flames due to 'spontaneous human combustion' as she sat on a park bench in Germany, has died. A horrified passerby attempted to smother the flames with his jacket. The woman - thought to be in her 40s - was rushed to a local hospital by air ambulance to Lubeck with severe burns, but could not be saved.

According to local media the woman didn't make a sound when she was engulfed in flames, and there is speculation that she could have either committed suicide or even been attacked. One German website reported two men were seen running away from the playground shortly before the incident took place, though there is no confirmation of this. However, Flensburg public prosecutor Otto Gosch was quick to dispel local speculation that the woman had been attacked. "We have no evidence that points to a third party fault," said Gosch, appearing to dismiss a theory that the woman was set on fire to disguise stab wounds.

Although born in Mauritius, the woman was well-known locally and her death has caused shock in this small community of 80,000 people 160 km (100 miles) north of Hamburg. Prosecutor Ulrike Stahlmann-Liebelt said: "The victim has lived in Flensburg for a long time and has family here." Suicide has not been ruled out as one explanation, said Stahlmann-Liebelt.

Investigators will attempt to discover how the victim came to be on fire despite there being no obvious cause - a controversial phenomenon known as "spontaneous human combustion" (SHC). Some 200 people through history are said to have burst into flames without any external cause, usually being reduced to ashes. Scientists have speculated that the human body may be capable of becoming like an inside-out candle, their clothing acting as a wick, their body fat acting as the wax.

**There are no comments yet**

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# EXCLUSIVE: Woman's 'face slashed' during séance to awaken dead of Alexandra Palace

express.co.uk

**THREE people said spirits of the dead physically touched them during a séance at Alexandra Palace, including a woman who claimed she felt her "face get slashed" before "blood ran out".**

By Jon Austin Jon Austin
PUBLISHED: 05:14, Thu, Oct 29, 2015 | UPDATED: 08:34, Thu, Oct 29, 2015



GETTY•CHARLOTTECODRAI•FACEBOOK

TV Psychic medium Charlotte Codrai carried out the paranormal activity in the upstairs of the 140-year-old building in an attempt to contact the dead connected to the history of the famous entertainment venue.

Around 20 other people took part in the séance which was watched by an Express.co.uk reporter in a darkened room on the first floor.

After putting them into a psychic trance, Ms Codrai, who insisted she knew nothing of the history of the landmark, began receiving a series of visions about its past, including "the sound of fire and a huge commotion."

At this point, a startled woman in the circle gasped: "I feel like someone just slashed my cheek and blood is coming out. My hands feel numb now."

There were no visible injuries on her, however.

The event was a key feature of the Mind Body & Soul new age exhibition on the ground floor of the building.

But while thousands of visitors downstairs browsed stands with massage, crystals and the latest in yoga and new age philosophies, Ms Codrai, who has worked with the likes of Derek Acorah was summoning the restless dead.

Before the drama the medium, who has appeared on paranormal programmes on Sky TV, said she did not feel any negative spirits would cause trouble but precautions were needed.

Everyone was asked to sit and hold hands in a circle before closing their eyes.

Ms Codrai said: "I am going to put a protective layer around us to ward off any negative

energies. I doubt there will be so don't panic.

"Everyone imagine tentacles in the floor going up your legs to keep you supported."

She then got them to imagine a "wonderful red orb of energy travelling into their spine - the root of their Chakra."

In some Indian religions, Chakra is said to be a spiritual energy point within the body for the life force prana.

After an array of imagined coloured orbs were virtually inserted into various chakra points across their bodies, and the group were deep in trance, she began to summon the dead.

She said: "I call upon the spirits of Alexandra Palace to step forward and influence us in some way."

Turning to the group, she said: "You may feel breath from them, or them touching your hair just allow them to draw closer. You may get a feeling like fine hair or cobwebs across your face as a spirit draws closer.

She then felt the presence of a malevolent spirit called Arthur, who she believed could have been a former caretaker.

She said: "I am getting the name Arthur over and over again. A caretaker?

"He is quite grumpy and not happy with us being here or anyone being here. He was grumpy with a deep voice and this is his place. I think he worked up until the end."



JONAUSTIN

I feel like someone just slashed my cheek and blood is coming out. My hands feel numb now.

Woman taking part in the séance

A man in the audience, who said he was also a psychic, said he was pushed from behind.

He said: "I felt something on my back and legs. Two hands on my back which pushed me forward."

He added he was rocked back and forward and felt red hot to cold quickly.

A middle-aged woman also reported a bizarre experience, where she felt her arms being forced upwards by something.



JONAUSTIN

The psychic then picked up on a female spirit, who she said wanted to communicate with a woman to her right.

She said: "Do you understand Shirley. Is Shirley in spirit? Did you know her to have a bit of an accent?

"She was quite a bold woman, forthright, and needed to have her voice heard. Quite stubborn.

"She had a stomach problem. It was quite unfortunate."

The woman said she understood this.

But the woman was not sure why Ms Codrai then got the sensation of butterflies in her own stomach or said the name of nearby Hornsey.



JONAUSTIN




JONAUSTIN

Ms Codrai added before this spirit allegedly left the room that the woman had a problem with her hip and back on the right side, but the woman said her back pain was on the left.

A drop in temperature is also allegedly said to signal a spirit emerging.

Ms Codrai used a digital temperature reader to test this and members of the growp used it on each other which showed in varied from 10C in one corner, to 21C at people's legs and around 28C on their upper bodies.

She also used a digital radio, amid claims spirits could speak through it, but the experiment

was abandoned for technical reasons.

The séance ended with a table-tipping experiment.

This is when the group rest their fingers on a table to communicate with spirits who are said to be able to move it from side to side or even raise its from the floor in extreme cases.

She said it was her first ever attempt and urged the buildings's spirits to use their energy to "lift the table".

Little happened, but some of the group reported feeling four or five vibrations as if it were about to start moving.

Sceptics have suggested the very fact that several people are touching an object from all directions, even the slightest tremor will begin a chain of movements.

But believers claim this would never cause the violent rocking and even levitations that are recorded as happening.

To finish, the remaining 17 circle members were asked if they had experienced anything.

Only three said nothing at all happened.

The 14 others experienced temperature changes or the cob web sensation.

"Quite a lot happened, I think the spirits really were trying to communicate," said Ms Codrai.

After the séance Ms Codrai allowed our reporter to test the digital temperature gun, which gave readings of 21C in the room and 28C when aimed at her.

She said: "If you took it all down it will be interesting to research what was right. I knew nothing about Alexandra Palace and did no research because that would be cheating."

To find out what she discovered about the venue during her séance and how much of it was right log on to Express.co.uk tomorrow.

7 Comments
tabitha2 days ago
Don't go to seances - I don't think it is compulsory.
Redsquirrel2 days ago
What a load of bollocks!
Penia2 days ago
I'm not against the idea of an afterlife and such but the idea of them slashing someone face is total rubbish.
manoftruth2 days ago
Good game, good game.
Northenmonkey2 days ago
Utter garbage.

change2 days ago

All of Derek Acorah's ghosts are very well behaved when he invites them in.

Korky2 days ago

That's because he has disciplined them well

Saturday, 31st October 2015

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Oct 31, 2015

**Was someone trying to keep the dead from rising out of their graves?**



skeleton-composite

**skeleton-composite**

*In Drawsko, Poland, strange mortuary relics found at a gravesite dating back to the 17th or 18th century included rocks placed at bodies' chins or in their mouths and sickles over the body.*

Once upon a time, a farmer in northwest Poland was tilling his field when he hit bone.

The field, a kilometre outside the rural village of Drawsko, turned out to be bristling with bones. It was a 17th- to 18th-century gravesite containing the skeletons of more than 330 individuals, haphazardly aligned and with no visible remnants of an associated church.

When archeologists began excavating in 2008, they discovered something else unusual: a handful of the skeletons had been buried with strange mortuary relics. Some had sickles placed across their necks or waists. Others had rocks in their mouths, or underneath their chins. What accounted for these deviant burials?

"All of these things we're seeing have to do with keeping the body in the grave," says Tracy Betsinger, a bioarcheologist at SUNY Oneonta who, with the University of Manitoba's Amy Scott, was called in to investigate.

The strangely buried bodies were thought to be those of vampires, and in the eyes of the community that interred them they were at risk of becoming reanimated after death.

Vampires are a consistent folkloric trope, and this Polish village clearly believed in them, explains Betsinger. "If you look cross-culturally and over time, pretty much every culture has some sort of thing that basically is a vampire, whether they use that term or not: the idea of the dead coming back."

But what marked these half-dozen individuals as a supposed threat to the living residents of postmedieval Drawsko? That was the question that Betsinger and Scott set out to answer.

"The first thing we wanted to do was (look for) health indicators or stress indicators that we can identify on the skeleton that might have changed their physical appearance," says Scott. Did their bones betray patterns of disease, trauma or congenital abnormalities? They looked

for cleft palates and gait-altering joint problems. They probed for evidence of diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy and syphilis, which can affect the skeleton if the sufferer is afflicted for long enough.

But there were no statistically significant differences between the "vampires" and other skeletons buried normally. In fact, the Drawsko skeletons all seemed unusually healthy for the time period, Scott says.

Another hypothesis was that the "vampires" had been outcasts because they were immigrants to Drawsko. And so, along with University of South Alabama anthropology professor Lesley Gregoricka, who specializes in biogeochemistry, the team analyzed strontium isotope ratios from the dental enamel of 60 of the skeletons, including five of the suspected vampires. (One, a toothless old woman, had no dental enamel to sample.)

Strontium isotopes result from the decay of rubidium in rock. Older rocks such as granite contain higher ratios of these isotopes than do younger rocks like basalt, so a region's geologic mix results in a specific local signature. This signature is chemically recorded in humans and animals when trace amounts are consumed and then mineralized in teeth. Because tooth enamel mineralizes in childhood, isotopic ratios could tell the researchers whether the "vampires" had been born elsewhere.

But the analysis didn't show that, and the "vampires" appeared to come from the same region as the rest of the skeletons.

Overlapping burial positions and ill-fitting wooden coffins led other researchers to suggest that the Drawsko site was an epidemic cemetery. Outbreaks of cholera occurred during the centuries for which it was in use. But Betsinger and Scott believe it would be unlikely for such a small community to furnish such a large epidemic graveyard.

"It's possible that one or more of these people were one of the first to die in an outbreak," says Betsinger. "But it's also just as likely that they were born out of wedlock, that they hadn't been baptized, that they were conceived during a holy period, that they were suspected of witchcraft in their life: that old lady down the street with four cats that everyone finds creepy, that kind of thing."

If the "vampires" were given deviant burials for cultural reasons, the researchers may not find skeletal clues.

"Unless we find something in the historical record that tells us more specifically, we're left with a lot of questions," Betsinger says.

But the investigation is ongoing; the researchers plan to analyze isotope ratios in non-dental bone and try to extract ancient DNA, which could reveal whether the vampires were from the same family, among other information.

"We're not at the end of our analytical possibilities, in terms of what we can actually look at," says Scott. "This is very much the starting point."



October 23, 2015

When Lafcadio Hearn stepped onto the shores of Japan in 1890, he began writing ghost stories. On assignment from *Harper's Magazine*, Hearn was charged to explore and explain this undiscovered country to eager Americans. That his answer was to write about Japan's spirits should have surprised no one; Hearn had a predilection for the macabre and uncanny. But while a previous sojourn in New Orleans had supplied him with ore for his imagination, in his new home he struck the mother lode. Japan is the most haunted country on Earth.

**A Religion of Ghosts**

Japan lives with its ghosts like few other cultures. Since ancient times, Japan's religion and culture has been deeply bound with ghosts, called *yūrei*. Both feared and revered, yūrei are part of the deep magic; a foundational belief that humans have a god inside of them. This powerful, supernatural entity—called *reikon* or *tamashi*—is held in check only by the meat-cocoon of the body. On death, the spirit is unleashed. For good or ill.

This powerful, supernatural entity…is held in check only by the meat-cocoon of the body. On death, the spirit is unleashed. For good or ill.

Edo period scholar Hirata Atsutane wrote, "The spirits of the dead continue to exist in the unseen world which is everywhere about us; and they all become gods of varying character and degrees of influence." If properly respected with the correct rituals, a person's spirit becomes a protective ancestor deity—called *kami* or *sōrei*. But if something goes wrong—if the spirit has some lingering business, or if death rites are not properly performed—then a yūrei is born.

Yūrei can never be destroyed, only sated. Desire is the key to yūrei—they *want* something. This drives them, gives them purpose. Their manifestation can be as benign as delivering a final "thank you" never said while alive, to as terrifying as shattering the earth with rage. Since ancient times, natural disasters were said to be the result of yūrei. Wielders of fire, flood, and earthquake, there is nothing more fearsome than an angry Japanese ghost.

The pacification and transformation of yūrei has dominated Japanese religion and politics for millennia. Controversial author Umehara Takeshi calls it the consistent theme through the history of Japanese civilization.

During the Heian period the government bowed to practitioners of Goryō Shinko—the Religion of Ghosts. To calm spirits, official rituals were performed to posthumously raise the dead in rank and title before they were enshrined as *kami,* protector spirits in Shinto shrines. This belief system was so pervasive that a ceremony to welcome the dead into the ranks of protective spirits was even established and observed in the Imperial Court.

Lafcadio Hearn said Japan lay under The Rule of the Dead. In his landmark 1903 book *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, he described a relationship where the living must pacify the dead, and in return the dead watch over the living. “And the hand of the dead was heavy;” Hearn wrote, “it is heavy on the living even today.”

**Yūrei and Storytelling**

Most people know that Japan is particularly good at ghost stories. As they should be; they have been working at it for some time. Theater, literature, art, or film—Japan’s storytelling is inherently haunted. Indeed, a history of Japanese literature is a history of ghost stories.

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Two of Japan’s oldest known books, the 12th century *Genji Monogatari* (*Tale of Genji*) and *Konjaku Monogatari* (*Tales of Times Now Past*) are bursting with yūrei. In *Genji Monogatari,* shining Prince Genji is haunted by the Lady Rokujō, whose love he spurned. She brings ghostly wrath down upon three of Genji’s lovers. Rokujō is a foundational character of Japanese storytelling—the woman of vengeance who uses her supernatural powers. *Konjaku Monogatari* is a famed collection of supernatural tales that have inspired Japan’s writers since its publication.

In 1776, Ueda Akinari adapted stories from *Konjaku Monogatari* as well as other classic supernatural tales into one of the greatest works of world literature, *Ugetsu Monogatari —Tales of Moonlight and Rain*. A profound book, *Ugestu Monogatari* is a virtuoso performance as well as a vehicle of transformation. Written by a man born in the mud to a nameless prostitute, Ueda used *Ugetsu Monogatari* to raise himself into a world of literati and respect denied to him by his birth.

Many of Japan’s talented writers have turned their skills towards yūrei. Just as everyone is said to have at least one novel in them, every Japanese author has at least one yūrei story to tell. Kawabata Yasunari, the first Japanese person to win the Nobel Prize for literature, wrote several yūrei stories, including the *Palm-of-the-Hand* story, “Fushi.” In the story, a beautiful young yūrei and an old man, her former lover, take a walk together, recounting their past and the situations that separated them and led to the girl’s suicide. Modern novelists like Yoshimoto Banana and Murakami Haruki have spun their own yūrei tales. And popular author Miyuki Miyabe’s 2013 book *Apparitions: Ghosts of Old Edo* showed that Japan’s old ghosts still have life left in them.

Folklorist Yanagita Kunio attributed this to what he called involuntary tradition—whether they believe in them or not, the Japanese people grow up simmering in a pot of ghost lore and

culture, until it seeps down to the bones.

**Yūrei in Modern Japan**

It's been a good century and some change since Hearn walked Japan, but modernity has not altered this dynamic or shaken Japan's beliefs. The dead still rule.

In the middle of Tokyo, a small section of prime real estate lies undeveloped out of fear of arousing the wrath of the samurai Taira no Masakado. After Masakado's execution in 940 CE his severed head was said to have flown from his body, bent on wrath. His head finally landed in a tiny fishing village where the locals enshrined it in order to appease his anger. That little village grew up to be the major metropolis of Tokyo, but the shrine remains undisturbed. In fact, in 1940 the Ministry of Finance paid for an extravagant ceremony to rededicate the shrine after a particularly fierce bolt of lightning struck their offices near Masakado's shrine. After WWII, when the American occupying forces tried to demolish the shrine, their bulldozer suddenly flipped over, killing the driver. Today, no one will touch it.

Similar shrines with similar stories can be found all over the country. Every stone shrine tucked inside the bushes along the side of the road or tiny statue of Jizo at a temple is dedicated to some spirit. A beautiful statue of a young girl staring at the sea in Mie prefecture is actually there to pacify an angry gang of yūrei that drowned a group of schoolgirls in 1955. The picturesque Himeji Castle, an UNESCO heritage site, boasts the Well of Okiku that figures in one of Japan's most famous yūrei legends.

In 2013, no one batted an eye when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was reluctant to move into his official residence because he felt it was haunted. While this would have stirred the media into a frenzy in the US, Japan considered it perfectly sensible. All you have to do is look at the news to see what arises from a state visit to Yasukuni Shrine—the modern incarnation of Japan's ghost religion Goryō Shinko. Home to Japan's honored war dead who have been elevated to kami spirts, including many Class A war criminals from WWII, Yasukuni Shrine it a controversial house of worship to say the least.

Because what Hearn wrote about Japan more than a century ago still holds true: *the hand of the dead was heavy; it is heavy on the living even today.*

ghostsJapanJapanese legendsyureiZack Davisson

Zack Davisson

Zack Davisson is an award winning translator, writer, and folklorist. He is the author of YUREI: THE JAPANESE GHOST from Chin Music Press, and contributor to WAYWARD from Image comics. He contributed to exhibitions at the WERELDMUSEUM ROTTERDAM and HENRY ART MUSEUM, and was nominated for the 2014 Japanese-US Friendship Commission Translation Prize for his translation of the Eisner Award winning SHOWA: A HISTORY OF JAPAN. He was a researcher and on-screen talent for National Geographic's TV special OKINAWA: THE LOST GHOSTS OF JAPAN and maintains the popular Japanese folklore website HYAKUMONOGATARI.COM. He resides in Seattle, Washington, with his

wife, Miyuki, dog Mochi, cats Bagheera and Sheer Khan, and several ghosts.

**3 Responses**

1. Japan, Most Haunted | Brandywine Books October 28, 2015

[…] When Lafcadio Hearn stepped onto the shores of Japan in 1890, he began writing ghost stories. On assignment from Harper's Magazine, Hearn was charged to explore and explain this undiscovered country to eager Americans. That his answer was to write about Japan's spirits should have surprised no one; Hearn had a predilection for the macabre and uncanny. But while a previous sojourn in New Orleans had supplied him with ore for his imagination, in his new home he struck the mother lode. Japan is the most haunted country on Earth. […]

Reply



2. Katrina October 29, 2015

It was very nice to read your article; one with depth and thought…and no slideshow.



Thank you.

Reply

3. The weekly web ramble (10/30) October 30, 2015

[…] – The ghosts (and ghostly stories) of Japan […]

Reply

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